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THE RÁMÁYAN.

VOL. III.

THE

RÁMÁYAN OF VÁLMÍKI

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

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THE RÁMÁYAN.

BOOK III.

CANTO I.

THE HERMITAGE.

When Ráma, valiant hero, stood
In the vast shade of Daṇḍak wood,
His eyes on every side he bent
And saw a hermit settlement,
Where coats of bark were hung around,
And holy grass bestrewed the ground.
Bright with Bráhmanic lustre glowed
That circle where the saints abode:
Like the hot sun in heaven it shone,
Too dazzling to be looked upon.
Wild creatures found a refuge where
The court, well-swept, was bright and fair,
And countless birds and roedeer made
Their dwelling in the friendly shade.
Beneath the boughs of well-loved trees
Oft danced the gay Apsarases.[1]
Around was many an ample shed
Wherein the holy fire was fed;
With sacred grass and skins of deer,
Ladles and sacrificial gear,
And roots and fruit, and wood to burn,

[1] Heavenly nymphs.

And many a brimming water-urn.
Tall trees their hallowed branches spread,
Laden with pleasant fruit, o'erhead;
And gifts which holy laws require,[1]
And solemn offerings burnt with fire,[2]
And Veda chants on every side
That home of hermits sanctified.
There many a flower its odour shed,
And lotus blooms the lake o'erspread.
There, clad in coats of bark and hide,—
Their food by roots and fruit supplied,—
Dwelt many an old and reverend sire
Bright as the sun or Lord of Fire,
All with each worldly sense subdued,
A pure and saintly multitude.
The Veda chants, the saints who trod
The sacred ground and mused on God,
Made that delightful grove appear
Like Brahmá's own most glorious sphere.
As Raghu's splendid son surveyed
That hermit home and tranquil shade,
He loosed his mighty bow-string, then
Drew nearer to the holy men.
With keen celestial sight endued
Those mighty saints the chieftain viewed,
With joy to meet the prince they came,
And gentle Sítá dear to fame.
They looked on virtuous Ráma, fair
As Soma[3] in the evening air,
And Lakshman by his brother's side,
And Sítá long in duty tried,

[1] The *bali*, or present of food to all created beings.

[2] The clarified butter &c. cast into the sacred fire.

[3] The Moon-God: 'he is,' says the commentator, 'the special deity of Bráhmans.'

And with glad blessings every sage
Received them in the hermitage.
Then Ráma's form and stature tall
Entranced the wondering eyes of all,—
His youthful grace, his strength of limb,
And garb that nobly sat on him.
To Lakshmaṇ too their looks they raised,
And upon Sítá's beauty gazed
With eyes that closed not lest their sight
Should miss the vision of delight.
Then the pure hermits of the wood,
Rejoicing in all creatures' good,
Their guest, the glorious Ráma, led
Within a cot with leaves o'erhead.
With highest honour all the best
Of radiant saints received their guest,
With kind observance, as is meet,
And gave him water for his feet.
To highest pitch of rapture wrought
Their stores of roots and fruit they brought.
They poured their blessings on his head,
And 'All we have is thine,' they said.
Then, reverent hand to hand applied,[1]
Each duty-loving hermit cried:
'The king is our protector, bright
In fame, maintainer of the right.
He bears the awful sword, and hence
Deserves an elder's reverence.
One fourth of Indra's essence, he
Preserves his realm from danger free.
Hence honoured by the world, of right
The king enjoys each choice delight.

[1] 'Because he was an incarnation of the deity,' says the commentator, 'otherwise such honour paid by men of the sacerdotal caste to one of the military would be improper.'

Thou shouldst to us protection give,
For in thy realm, dear lord, we live:
Whether in town or wood thou be,
Thou art our king, thy people we.
Our worldly arms are laid aside,
Our hearts are tamed and purified.
To thee our guardian, we who earn
Our only wealth by penance, turn.'

Then the pure dwellers in the shade
To Raghu's son due honour paid,
And Lakshman, bringing store of roots,
And many a flower, and woodland fruits.
And others strove the prince to please
With all attentive courtesies.

CANTO II.

VIRÁDHA.

Thus entertained he passed the night,
Then, with the morning's early light,
To all the hermits bade adieu
And sought his onward way anew.
He pierced the mighty forest where
Roamed many a deer and pard and bear:
Its ruined pools he scarce could see
For creeper rent and prostrate tree,
Where shrill cicalas' cries were heard,
And plaintive notes of many a bird.
Deep in the thickets of the wood
With Lakshman and his spouse he stood.
There in the horrid shade he saw
A giant passing nature's law:
Vast as some mountain-peak in size,
With mighty voice and sunken eyes,
Huge, hideous, tall, with monstrous face,
Most ghastly of his giant race.
A tiger's hide the Rákshas wore
Still reeking with the fat and gore:
Huge-faced, like Him who rules the dead,
All living things he struck with dread.
Three lions, tigers four, ten deer
He carried on his iron spear,
Two wolves, an elephant's head beside
With mighty tusks which blood-drops dye
When on the three his fierce eye fell,
He charged them with a roar and yell

As furious as the grisly King
When stricken worlds are perishing.
Then with a mighty roar that shook
The earth beneath their feet, he took
The trembling Sítá to his side,
Withdrew a little space, and cried:
'Ha, short-lived wretches! ye who dare,
In hermit dress with matted hair,
Armed each with arrows, sword, and bow,
Through Daṇḍak's pathless wood to go:
How with one dame, I bid you tell,
Can you among ascetics dwell?
Who are ye, sinners, who despise
The right, in holy men's disguise?
The great Virádha, day by day
Through this deep-tangled wood I stray,
And ever, armed with trusty steel,
I seize a saint to make my meal.
This woman young and fair of frame
Shall be the conquering giant's dame:
Your blood, ye things of evil life,
My lips shall quaff in battle strife.'
He spoke: and Janak's hapless child,
Scared by his speech so fierce and wild,
Trembled for terror, as a frail
Young plantain shivers in the gale.
When Ráma saw Virádha clasp
Fair Sítá in his mighty grasp,
Thus with pale lips that terror dried
The hero to his brother cried:
'O see Virádha's arm enfold
My darling in its cursed hold,—
The child of Janak best of kings,
My spouse whose soul to virtue clings,

Sweet princess, with pure glory bright,
Nursed in the lap of soft delight.
Now falls the blow Kaikeyí meant,
Successful in her dark intent:
This day her cruel soul will be
Triumphant over thee and me.
Though Bharat on the throne is set,
Her greedy eyes look farther yet:
Me from my home she dared expel,
Me whom all creatures loved so well.
This fatal day at length, I ween,
Brings triumph to the younger queen:
I see with bitterest grief and shame
Another touch the Maithil dame.
Not loss of sire and royal power
So grieves me as this mournful hour.'

Thus in his anguish cried the chief:
Then drowned in tears, o'erwhelmed by grief,
Thus Lakshman in his anger spake,
Quick panting like a spell-bound snake:

'Canst thou, my brother, Indra's peer,
When I thy minister am near,
Thus grieve like some forsaken thing,
Thou, every creature's lord and king?
My vengeful shaft the fiend shall slay,
And earth shall drink his blood to-day.
The fury which my soul at first
Upon usurping Bharat nursed,
On this Virádha will I wreak
As Indra splits the mountain peak.
Winged by this arm's impetuous might
My shaft with deadly force
The monster in the chest shall smite,
And fell his shattered corse.'

CANTO III.

VIRÁDHA ATTACKED.

Virádha with a fearful shout
That echoed through the wood, cried out:
'What men are ye, I bid you say,
And whither would ye bend your way?'
To him whose mouth shot fiery flame
The hero told his race and name:
'Two Warriors, nobly bred, are we,
And through this wood we wander free.
But who art thou, how born and styled,
Who roamest here in Daṇḍak's wild?'

To Ráma, bravest of the brave,
His answer thus Virádha gave:
'Hear, Raghu's son, and mark me well,
And I my name and race will tell.
Of Śatahradá born, I spring
From Java as my sire, O King:
Me, of this lofty lineage, all
Giants on earth Virádha call.
The rites austere I long maintained
From Brahmá's grace the boon have gained
To bear a charmed frame which ne'er
Weapon or shaft may pierce or tear.
Go as ye came, untouched by fear,
And leave with me this woman here:
Go, swiftly from my presence fly,
Or by this hand ye both shall die.'
Then Ráma with his fierce eyes red

With fury to the giant said:
'Woe to thee, sinner, fond and weak,
Who madly thus thy death wilt seek!
Stand, for it waits thee in the fray:
With life thou ne'er shalt flee away.'
He spoke, and raised the cord whereon
A pointed arrow flashed and shone,
Then, wild with anger, from his bow
He launched the weapon on the foe.
Seven times the fatal cord he drew,
And forth seven rapid arrows flew,
Shafts winged with gold that left the wind
And e'en Suparṇa's[1] self behind.
Full on the giant's breast they smote,
And purpled like the peacock's throat,
Passed through his mighty bulk and came
To earth again like flakes of flame.
The fiend the Maithil dame unclasped;
In his fierce hand his spear he grasped,
And wild with rage, pierced through and through,
At Ráma and his brother flew.
So loud the roar which chilled with fear,
So massy was the monster's spear,
He seemed, like Indra's flagstaff, dread
As the dark God who rules the dead.
On huge Virádha fierce as He[2]
Who smites, and worlds have ceased to be,
The princely brothers poured amain
Their fiery flood of arrowy rain.
Unmoved he stood, and opening wide
His dire mouth laughed unterrified,
And ever as the monster gaped

[1] The King of birds.
[2] *Kálántakayamopamam*, resembling Yama the destroyer.

Those arrows from his jaws escaped.
Preserving still his life unharmed,
By Brahmá's saving promise charmed,
His mighty spear aloft in air
He raised, and rushed upon the pair.
From Ráma's bow two arrows flew
And cleft that massive spear in two,
Dire as the flaming levin sent
From out the cloudy firmament.
Cut by the shafts he guided well
To earth the giant's weapon fell:
As when from Meru's summit, riven
By fiery bolts, a rock is driven.
Then swift his sword each warrior drew,
Like a dread serpent black of hue,
And gathering fury for the blow
Rushed fiercely on the giant foe.
Around each prince an arm he cast,
And held the dauntless heroes fast;
Then, though his gashes gaped and bled,
Bearing the twain he turned and fled.
Then Ráma saw the giant's plan,
And to his brother thus began:
'O Lakshmaṇ, let Virádha still
Hurry us onward as he will,
For look, Sumitrá's son, he goes
Along the path we freely chose.'

He spoke: the rover of the night
Upraised them with terrific might,
Till, to his lofty shoulders swung,
Like children to his neck they clung.
Then sending far his fearful roar,
The princes through the wood he bore,—
A wood like some vast cloud to view,

Where birds of every plumage flew,
And mighty trees o'erarching threw
  Dark shadows on the ground;
Where snakes and silvan creatures made
Their dwelling, and the jackal strayed
  Through tangled brakes around.

CANTO IV.

VIRÁDHA'S DEATH.

But Sítá viewed with wild affright
The heroes hurried from her sight.
She tossed her shapely arms on high,
And shrieked aloud her bitter cry:
'Ah, the dread giant bears away
The princely Ráma as his prey,
Truthful and pure, and good and great,
And Lakshmaṇ shares his brother's fate.
The brindled tiger and the bear
My mangled limbs for food will tear.
Take me, O best of giants, me,
And leave the sons of Raghu free.'

Then, by avenging fury spurred,
Her mournful cry the heroes heard,
And hastened, for the lady's sake,
The wicked monster's life to take.
Then Lakshmaṇ with resistless stroke
The foe's left arm that held him broke,
And Ráma too, as swift to smite,
Smashed with his heavy hand the right.
With broken arms and tortured frame
To earth the fainting giant came,
Like a huge cloud, or mighty rock
Rent, sundered by the levin's shock.
Then rushed they on, and crushed and beat
Their foe with arms and fists and feet,
And nerved each mighty limb to pound

And bray him on the level ground.
Keen arrows and each biting blade
Wide rents in breast and side had made;
But crushed and torn and mangled, still
The monster lived they could not kill.
When Ráma saw no arms might slay
The fiend who like a mountain lay,
The glorious hero, swift to save
In danger, thus his counsel gave:
'O Prince of men, his charmed life
No arms may take in battle strife:
Now dig we in this grove a pit
His elephantine bulk to fit,
And let the hollowed earth enfold
The monster of gigantic mould.'

This said, the son of Raghu pressed
His foot upon the giant's breast.
With joy the prostrate monster heard
Victorious Ráma's welcome word,
And straight Kakutstha's son, the best
Of men, in words like these addressed:
'I yield, O chieftain, overthrown
By might that vies with Indra's own.
Till now my folly-blinded eyes
Thee, hero, failed to recognize.
Happy Kausalyá! blest to be
The mother of a son like thee!
I known thee well, O chieftain, now:
Ráma, the prince of men, art thou.
There stands the high-born Maithil dame,
There Lakshman, lord of mighty fame.
My name was Tumburu,[1] for song

[1] Somewhat inconsistently with this part of the story Tumburu is mentioned in Book II. Canto XII as one of the Gandharvas or heavenly minstrels summoned to perform at Bharadvája's feast.

Renowned among the minstrel throng:
Cursed by Kuvera's stern decree
I wear the hideous shape you see.
But when I sued, his grace to crave,
The glorious God this answer gave:
'When Ráma, Daśaratha's son,
Destroys thee and the fight is won,
Thy proper shape once more assume,
And heaven again shall give thee room.'
When thus the angry God replied,
No prayers could turn his wrath aside,
And thus on me his fury fell
For loving Rambhá's[1] charms too well.
Now through thy favour am I freed
From the stern fate the God decreed,
And saved, O tamer of the foe,
By thee, to heaven again shall go.
A league, O Prince, beyond this spot
Stands holy Śarabhanga's cot:
The very sun is not more bright
Than that most glorious anchorite:
To him, O Ráma, quickly turn,
And blessings from the hermit earn.
First under earth my body throw,
Then on thy way rejoicing go.
Such is the law ordained of old
For giants when their days are told:
Their bodies laid in earth, they rise
To homes eternal in the skies.'
Thus, by the rankling dart oppressed,
Kakutstha's offspring he addressed:
In earth his mighty body lay,

[1] Rambhá appears in Book I. Canto LXIV as the temptress of Viśvámitra.

His spirit fled to heaven away.

Thus spake Virádha ere he died;
And Ráma to his brother cried:
'Now dig we in this grove a pit
His elephantine bulk to fit,
And let the hollowed earth enfold
This mighty giant fierce and bold.'
This said, the valiant hero put
Upon the giant's neck his foot.
His spade obedient Lakshman plied,
And dug a pit both deep and wide
By lofty-souled Virádha's side.
Then Raghu's son his foot withdrew,
And down the mighty form they threw;
One awful shout of joy he gave
And sank into the open grave.
The heroes, to their purpose true,
In fight the cruel demon slew,
And radiant with delight
Deep in the hollowed earth they cast
The monster roaring to the last,
In their resistless might.
Thus when they saw the warrior's steel
No life-destroying blow might deal,
The pair, for lore renowned,
Deep in the pit their hands had made
The unresisting giant laid,
And killed him neath the ground.
Upon himself the monster brought
From Ráma's hand the death he sought
With strong desire to gain:
And thus the rover of the night
Told Ráma, as they strove in fight,
That swords might rend and arrows smite

Upon his breast in vain.
Thus Ráma, when his speech he heard,
The giant's mighty form interred,
Which mortal arms defied.
With thundering crash the giant fell,
And rock and cave and forest dell
With echoing roar replied.
The princes, when their task was done
And freedom from the peril won,
Rejoiced to see him die.
Then in the boundless wood they strayed,
Like the great sun and moon displayed
Triumphant in the sky.[1]

[1] The conclusion of this Canto is all a vain repetition; it is manifestly spurious and a very feeble imitation of Válmíki's style. See Vol. II. *Additional Notes.* p. 499.

CANTO V.

ŚARABHANGA.

Then Ráma, having slain in fight
Virádha of terrific might,
With gentle words his spouse consoled,
And clasped her in his loving hold.
Then to his brother nobly brave
The valiant prince his counsel gave:
'Wild are these woods around us spread,
And hard and rough the ground to tread:
We, O my brother, ne'er have viewed
So dark and drear a solitude:
To Śarabhanga let us haste,
Whom wealth of holy works has graced.'
Thus Ráma spoke, and took the road
To Śarabhanga's pure abode.
But near that saint whose lustre vied
With Gods, by penance purified,
With startled eyes the prince beheld
A wondrous sight unparalleled.
In splendour like the fire and sun
He saw a great and glorious one.
Upon a noble car he rode,
And many a God behind him glowed:
And earth beneath his feet unpressed[1]
The monarch of the skies confessed.
Ablaze with gems, no dust might dim

[1] 'Even when he had alighted,' says the commentator. The feet of Gods do not touch the ground.

The bright attire that covered him.
Arrayed like him, on every side
High saints their master glorified.
Near, borne in air, appeared in view
His car which tawny coursers drew,
Like silver cloud, the moon, or sun
Ere yet the day is well begun.
Wreathed with gay garlands, o'er his head
A pure white canopy was spread,
And lovely nymphs stood nigh to hold
Fair chouris with their sticks of gold,
Which, waving in each gentle hand,
The forehead of their monarch fanned.
God, saint, and bard, a radiant ring,
Sang glory to their heavenly King:
Forth into joyful lauds they burst
As Indra with the sage conversed.
Then Rāma, when his wondering eyes
Beheld the monarch of the skies,
To Lakshman quickly called, and showed
The car wherein Lord Indra rode:
'See, brother, see that air-borne car,
Whose wondrous glory shines afar:
Wherefrom so bright a lustre streams
That like a falling sun it seems.
These are the steeds whose fame we know,
Of heavenly race through heaven they go:
These are the steeds who bear the yoke
Of Śakra,[1] Him whom all invoke.
Behold these youths, a glorious band,
Toward every wind a hundred stand:
A sword in each right hand is borne,
And rings of gold their arms adorn.

[1] A name of Indra.

What might in every broad deep chest
And club-like arm is manifest!
Clothed in attire of crimson hue
They show like tigers fierce to view.
Great chains of gold each warder deck,
Gleaming like fire beneath his neck.
The age of each fair youth appears
Some score and five of human years:
The ever-blooming prime which they
Who live in heaven retain for aye:
Such mien these lordly beings wear,
Heroic youths, most bright and fair.
Now, brother, in this spot, I pray,
With the Videhan lady stay,
Till I have certain knowledge who
This being is, so bright to view.'

He spoke, and turning from the spot
Sought Śarabhanga's hermit cot.
But when the lord of Śachí[1] saw
The son of Raghu near him draw,
He hastened of the sage to take
His leave, and to his followers spake:

'See, Ráma bends his steps this way,
But ere he yet a word can say,
Come, fly to our celestial sphere;
It is not meet he see me here.
Soon victor and triumphant he
In fitter time shall look on me.
Before him still a great emprise,
A task too hard for others, lies.'

Then with all marks of honour high
The Thunderer bade the saint good-bye,
And in his car which coursers drew

[1] Śachí is the consort of Indra.

Away to heaven the conqueror flew.
Then Ráma, Lakshman, and the dame,
To Śarábhanga nearer came,
Who sat beside the holy flame.
Before the ancient sage they bent,
And clasped his feet most reverent;
Then at his invitation found
A seat beside him on the ground.
Then Ráma prayed the sage would deign
Lord Indra's visit to explain;
And thus at length the holy man
In answer to his prayer began:

'This Lord of boons has sought me here
To waft me hence to Brahmá's sphere,
Won by my penance long and stern,—
A home the lawless ne'er can earn.
But when I knew that thou wast nigh,
To Brahmá's world I could not fly
Until these longing eyes were blest
With seeing thee, mine honoured guest.
Since thou, O Prince, hast cheered my sight,
Great-hearted lover of the right,
To heavenly spheres will I repair
And bliss supreme that waits me there.
For I have won, dear Prince, my way
To those fair worlds which ne'er decay,
Celestial seat of Brahmá's reign:
Be thine, with me, those worlds to gain.'

Then, master of all sacred lore,
Spake Ráma to the saint once more:

'I, even I, illustrious sage,
Will make those worlds mine heritage:
But now, I pray, some home assign
Within this holy grove of thine.'

Thus Rāma, Indra's peer in might,
Addressed the aged anchorite;
And he, with wisdom well endued,
To Raghu's son his speech renewed:
'Sutīkshṇa's woodland home is near,
A glorious saint of life austere,
True to the path of duty: he
With highest bliss will prosper thee.
Against the stream thy course must be
Of this fair brook Mandākiní,
Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide;
Then to his cottage turn aside.
There lies thy path: but ere thou go,
Look on me, dear one, till I throw
Aside this mould that girds me in,
As casts the snake his withered skin.'
He spoke, the fire in order laid,
With holy oil due offerings made,
And Śarabhanga, glorious sire,
Laid down his body in the fire.
Then rose the flame above his head,
On skin, blood, flesh, and bones it fed,
Till forth, transformed, with radiant hue
Of tender youth, he rose anew.
Far-shining in his bright attire
Came Śarabhanga from the pyre:
Above the home of saints, and those
Who feed the quenchless flame,[1] he rose:
Beyond the seat of Gods he passed,
And Brahmā's sphere was gained at last.
The noblest of the twice-born race,

[1] The spheres or mansions gained by those who have duly performed the sacrifices required of them. Different situations are assigned to these spheres, some placing them near the sun, others near the moon.

For holy works supreme in place,
The Mighty Father there beheld
Girt round by hosts unparalleled ;
And Brahmá joying at the sight
Welcomed the glorious anchorite.

CANTO VI.

RÁMA'S PROMISE.

When he his heavenly home had found,
The holy men who dwelt around
To Ráma flocked, whose martial fame
Shone glorious as the kindled flame:
Vaikhánasas[1] who love the wild,
Pure hermits Bálakhilyas[2] styled,
Good Samprakshálas,[3] saints who live
On rays which moon and daystar give:
Those who with leaves their lives sustain,
And those who pound with stones their grain:
And they who lie in pools, and those
Whose corn, save teeth, no winnow knows:
Those who for beds the cold earth use,
And those who every couch refuse:
And those condemned to ceaseless pains,
Whose single foot their weight sustains:
And those who sleep neath open skies,
Whose food the wave or air supplies,
And hermits pure who spend their nights
On ground prepared for sacred rites:
Those who on hills their vigil hold,

[1] Hermits who live upon roots which they dig out of the earth: literally *diggers*, derived from the prefix *vi* and *khan* to dig.

[2] Generally, divine personages of the height of a man's thumb, produced from Brahmá's hair: here, according to the commentator followed by Gorresio, hermits who when they have obtained fresh food throw away what they had laid up before.

[3] Sprung from the washings of Vishṇu's feet.

Or dripping clothes around them fold:
The devotees who live for prayer,
Or the five fires[1] unflinching bear.
On contemplation all intent,
With light that heavenly knowledge lent,
They came to Ráma, saint and sage,
In Śarabhanga's hermitage.
The hermit crowd around him pressed,
And thus the virtuous chief addressed:
'The lordship of the earth is thine,
O Prince of old Ikshváku's line.
Lord of the Gods is Indra, so
Thou art our lord and guide below.
Thy name, the glory of thy might,
Throughout the triple world are bright:
Thy filial love so nobly shown,
Thy truth and virtue well are known.
To thee, O lord, for help we fly,
And on thy love of right rely:
With kindly patience hear us speak,
And grant the boon we humbly seek.
That lord of earth were most unjust,
Foul traitor to his solemn trust,
Who should a sixth of all[2] require,
Nor guard his people like a sire.
But he who ever watchful strives
To guard his subjects' wealth and lives,
Dear as himself or, dearer still,
His sons, with earnest heart and will,—
That king, O Raghu's son, secures
High fame that endless years endures,
And he to Brahmá's world shall rise,

[1] Four fires burning round them, and the sun above.

[2] The tax allowed to the king by the Laws of Manu.

Made glorious in the eternal skies.
Whate'er, by duty won, the meed
Of saints whom roots and berries feed,
One fourth thereof, for tender care
Of subjects, is the monarch's share.
These, mostly of the Bráhman race,
Who make the wood their dwelling-place,
Although a friend in thee they view,
Fall friendless neath the giant crew.
Come, Ráma, come, and see hard by
The holy hermits' corpses lie,
Where many a tangled pathway shows
The murderous work of cruel foes.
These wicked fiends the hermits kill
Who live on Chitrakúṭa's hill,
And blood of slaughtered saints has dyed
Mandákiní and Pampá's side.
No longer can we bear to see
The death of saint and devotee
Whom through the forest day by day
These Rákshases unpitying slay.
To thee, O Prince, we flee, and crave
Thy guardian help our lives to save.
From these fierce rovers of the night
Defend each stricken anchorite.
Throughout the world 'twere vain to seek
An arm like thine to aid the weak.
O Prince, we pray thee hear our call,
And from these fiends preserve us all.'

The son of Raghu heard the plaint
Of penance-loving sage and saint,
And the good prince his speech renewed
To all the hermit multitude:

'To me, O saints, ye need not sue:

I wait the hests of all of you.
I by mine own occasion led
This mighty forest needs must tread,
And while I keep my sire's decree
Your lives from threatening foes will free.
I hither came of free accord
To lend the aid by you implored,
And richest meed my toil shall pay,
While here in forest shades I stay.
I long in battle strife to close,
And slay these fiends, the hermits' foes,
That saint and sage may learn aright
My prowess and my brother's might.'

Thus to the saints his promise gave
That prince who still to virtue clave
With never-wandering thought:
And then with Lakshmaṇ by his side,
With penance-wealthy men to guide,
Sutíkshṇa's home he sought.

CANTO VII.

SUTÍKSHṆA.

So Raghu's son, his foemen's dread,
With Sítá and his brother sped,
Girt round by many a twice-born sage,
To good Sutíkshṇa's hermitage.[1]
Through woods for many a league he passed,
O'er rushing rivers full and fast,
Until a mountain fair and bright
As lofty Meru rose in sight.
Within its belt of varied wood
Ikshváku's sons and Sítá stood,
Where trees of every foliage bore
Blossom and fruit in endless store.
There coats of bark, like garlands strung,
Before a lonely cottage hung,
And there a hermit, dust-besmeared,
A lotus on his breast, appeared.
Then Ráma with obeisance due
Addressed the sage, as near he drew:
'My name is Ráma, lord; I seek
Thy presence, saint, with thee to speak.
O sage, whose merits ne'er decay,
Some word unto thy servant say.'
The sage his eyes on Ráma bent,
Of virtue's friends preëminent;
Then words like these he spoke, and pressed

[1] Near the celebrated Rámagiri or Ráma's Hill, now Rám tek, near Nagpore—the scene of the Yaksha's exile in the *Messenger Cloud*

The son of Raghu to his breast:
'Welcome to thee, illustrious youth,
Best champion of the rights of truth!
By thine approach this holy ground
A worthy lord this day has found.
I could not quit this mortal frame
Till thou shouldst come, O dear to fame:
To heavenly spheres I would not rise,
Expecting thee with eager eyes.
I knew that thou, unkinged, hadst made
Thy home in Chitrakúṭa's shade.
E'en now, O Ráma, Indra, lord
Supreme by all the Gods adored,
King of the Hundred Offerings,[1] said,
When he my dwelling visited,
That the good works that I have done
My choice of all the worlds have won.
Accept this meed of holy vows,
And with thy brother and thy spouse,
Roam, through my favour, in the sky
Which saints celestial glorify.'

To that bright sage, of penance stern,
The high-souled Ráma spake in turn,
As Vásava[2] who rules the skies
To Brahmá's gracious speech replies:
'I of myself those worlds will win,
O mighty hermit pure from sin:
But now, O saint, I pray thee tell
Where I within this wood may dwell:
For I by Śarabhanga old,
The son of Gautama, was told

[1] A hundred *Aśvamedhas* or sacrifices of a horse raise the sacrificer to the dignity of Indra.

[2] Indra.

That thou in every lore art wise,
And seest all with loving eyes.'
  Thus to the saint, whose glories high
Filled all the world, he made reply:
And thus again the holy man
His pleasant speech with joy began:
  'This calm retreat, O Prince, is blest
With many a charm: here take thy rest.
Here roots and kindly fruits abound,
And hermits love the holy ground.
Fair silvan beasts and gentle deer
In herds unnumbered wander here:
And as they roam, secure from harm,
Our eyes with grace and beauty charm:
Except the beasts in thickets bred,
This grove of ours has naught to dread.'
  The hermit's speech when Ráma heard,—
The hero ne'er by terror stirred,—
On his great bow his hand he laid,
And thus in turn his answer made:
'O saint, my darts of keenest steel,
Armed with their murderous barbs, would deal
Destruction mid the silvan race
That flocks around thy dwelling-place.
Most wretched then my fate would be
For such dishonour shown to thee:
And only for the briefest stay
Would I within this grove delay.'
  He spoke and ceased. With pious care
He turned him to his evening prayer,
Performed each customary rite,
And sought his lodging for the night,
With Sítá and his brother laid
Beneath the grove's delightful shade.

First good Sutíkshṇa, when he saw
The shades of night around them draw,
With hospitable care
The princely chieftains entertained
With store of choicest food ordained
For holy hermit's fare.

CANTO VIII.

THE HERMITAGE.

So Ráma and Sumitrá's son,
When every honour due was done,
Slept through the night. When morning broke,
The heroes from their rest awoke.
Betimes the son of Raghu rose,
With gentle Sítá, from repose,
And sipped the cool delicioous wave
Sweet with the scent the lotus gave.
Then to the Gods and sacred flame
The heroes and the lady came,
And bent their heads in honour meet
Within the hermit's pure retreat.
When every stain was purged away,
They saw the rising Lord of Day:
Then to Sutíkshṇa's side they went,
And softly spoke, most reverent:
'Well have we slept, O holy lord,
Honoured of thee by all adored:
Now leave to journey forth we pray:
These hermits urge us on our way.
We haste to visit, wandering by,
The ascetics' homes that round you lie,
And roaming Daṇḍak's mighty wood
To view each saintly brotherhood.
For thy permission now we sue,
With these high saints to duty true,'
By penance taught each sense to tame,—

In lustre like the smokeless flame.
Ere on our brows the sun can beat
With fierce intolerable heat,
Like some unworthy lord who wins
His power by tyranny and sins,
O saint, we fain would part.' The three
Bent humbly to the devotee.
He raised the princes as they pressed
His feet, and strained them to his breast;
And then the chief of devotees
Bespake them both in words like these:
'Go with thy brother, Ráma, go,
Pursue thy path untouched by woe:
Go with thy faithful Sítá, she
Still like a shadow follows thee.
Roam Daṇḍak wood observing well
The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,—
Pure saints whose ordered souls adhere
To penance rites and vows austere.
There plenteous roots and berries grow,
And noble trees their blossoms show,
And gentle deer and birds of air
In peaceful troops are gathered there.
There see the full-blown lotus stud
The bosom of the lucid flood,
And watch the joyous mallard shake
The reeds that fringe the pool and lake.
See with delighted eye the rill
Leap sparkling from her parent hill,
And hear the woods that round thee lie
Reëcho to the peacock's cry.
And as I bid thy brother, so,
Sumitrá's child, I bid thee go.
Go forth, these varied beauties see,

And then once more return to me.'

Thus spake the sage Sutíkshṇa: both
The chiefs assented, nothing loth.
Round him with circling steps they paced,
Then for the road prepared with haste.
There Sítá stood, the dame long-eyed,
Fair quivers round their waists she tied,
And gave each prince his trusty bow,
And sword which ne'er a spot might know.
Each took his quiver from her hand,
And clanging bow and gleaming brand:
Then from the hermits' home the two
Went forth each woodland scene to view.
Each beauteous in the bloom of age,
Dismissed by that illustrious sage,
With bow and sword accoutred, hied
Away, and Sítá by their side.

CANTO IX.

SÍTÁ'S SPEECH.

Blest by the sage, when Raghu's son
His onward journey had begun,
Thus in her soft tone Sítá, meek
With modest fear, began to speak:
'One little slip the great may lead
To shame that follows lawless deed:
Such shame, my lord, as still must cling
To faults from low desire that spring.
Three several sins defile the soul,
Born of desire that spurns control:
First, utterance of a lying word,
Then, viler both, the next, and third:
The lawless love of other's wife,
The thirst of blood uncaused by strife.
The first, O Raghu's son, in thee
None yet has found, none e'er shall see.
Love of another's dame destroys
All merit, lost for guilty joys:
Ráma, such crime in thee, I ween,
Has ne'er been found, shall ne'er be seen:
The very thought, my princely lord,
Is in thy secret soul abhorred.
For thou hast ever been the same
Fond lover of thine own dear dame,
Content with faithful heart to do
Thy father's will, most just and true:
Justice, and faith, and many a grace

In thee have found a resting-place.
Such virtues, Prince, the good may gain
Who empire o'er each sense retain ;
And well canst thou, with loving view
Regarding all, each sense subdue.
But for the third, the lust that strives,
Insatiate still, for others' lives,—
Fond thirst of blood where hate is none,—
This, O my lord, thou wilt not shun.
Thou hast but now a promise made,
The saints of Daṇḍak wood to aid ;
And to protect their lives from ill
The giants' blood in fight wilt spill :
And from thy promise lasting fame
Will glorify the forest's name.
Armed with thy bow and arrows thou
Forth with thy brother journeyest now,
While as I think how true thou art
Fears for thy bliss assail my heart,
And all my spirit at the sight
Is troubled with a strange affright.
I like it not—it seems not good—
Thy going thus to Daṇḍak wood :
And I, if thou wilt mark me well,
The reason of my fear will tell.
Thou with thy brother, bow in hand,
Beneath those ancient trees wilt stand,
And thy keen arrows will not spare
Wood-rovers who will meet thee there.
For as the fuel food supplies
That bids the dormant flame arise,
Thus when the warrior grasps his bow
He feels his breast with ardour glow.
Deep in a holy grove, of yore,

Where bird and beast from strife forbore,
Śuchi beneath the sheltering boughs,
A truthful hermit, kept his vows.
Then Indra, Śachí's heavenly lord,
Armed like a warrior with a sword,
Came to his tranquil home to spoil
The hermit of his holy toil,
And left the glorious weapon there
Entrusted to the hermit's care,
A pledge for him to keep, whose mind
To fervent zeal was all resigned.
He took the brand: with utmost heed
He kept it for the warrior's need:
To keep his trust he fondly strove
When roaming in the neighbouring grove:
Whene'er for roots and fruit he strayed
Still by his side he bore the blade:
Still on his sacred charge intent,
He took his treasure when he went.
As day by day that brand he wore,
The hermit, rich in merit's store,
From penance rites each thought withdrew,
And fierce and wild his spirit grew.
With heedless soul he spurned the right,
And found in cruel deeds delight.
So, living with the sword, he fell,
A ruined hermit, down to hell.
This tale applies to those whe deal
Too closely with the warrior's steel:
The steel to warriors is the same
As fuel to the smouldering flame.
Sincere affection prompts my speech:
I honour where I fain would teach.
Mayst thou, thus armed with shaft and bow,

So dire a longing never know
As, when no hatred prompts the fray,
These giants of the wood to slay:
For he who kills without offence
Shall win but little glory thence.
The bow the warrior joys to bend
Is lent him for a nobler end,
That he may save and succour those
Who watch in woods when pressed by foes.
What, matched with woods, is bow or steel?
What, warrior's arm with hermit's zeal?
We with such might have naught to do:
The forest rule should guide us too.
But when Ayodhyá hails thee lord,
Be then thy warrior life restored:
So shall thy sire[1] and mother joy
In bliss that naught may e'er destroy.
And if, resigning empire, thou
Submit thee to the hermit's vow,
The noblest gain from virtue springs,
And virtue joy unending brings.
All earthly blessings virtue sends:
On virtue all the world depends.
Those who with vow and fasting tame
To due restraint the mind and frame,
Win by their labour, nobly wise,
The highest virtue for their prize.
Pure in the hermit's grove remain,
True to thy duty, free from stain.
But the three worlds are open thrown

[1] Gorresio observes that Daśaratha was dead and that Sítá had been informed of his death. In his translation he substitutes for the words of the text 'thy relations and mine.' This is quite superfluous. Daśaratha though in heaven still took a loving interest in the fortunes of his son.

To thee, by whom all things are known.
Who gave me power that I should dare
His duty to my lord declare?
'Tis woman's fancy, light as air,
That moves my foolish breast.
Now with thy brother counsel take,
Reflect, thy choice with judgment make,
And do what seems the best.'

CANTO X.

RÁMA'S REPLY.

The words that Sítá uttered, spurred
By truest love, the hero heard:
Then he who ne'er from virtue strayed
To Janak's child his answer made:
'In thy wise speech, sweet love, I find
True impress of thy gentle mind,
Well skilled the warrior's path to trace,
Thou pride of Janak's ancient race.
What fitting answer shall I frame
To thy good words, my honoured dame?
Thou sayst the warrior bears the bow
That misery's tears may cease to flow;
And those pure saints who love the shade
Of Daṇḍak wood are sore dismayed.
They sought me of their own accord,
With suppliant prayers my aid inplored:
They, fed on roots and fruit, who spend
Their lives where bosky wilds extend,
My timid love, enjoy no rest
By these malignant fiends distressed.
These make the flesh of man their meat:
The helpless saints they kill and eat.
The hermits sought my side, the chief
Of Brâhman race declared their grief.
I heard, and from my lips there fell
The words which thou rememberest well:
I listened as the hermits cried,

And to their prayers I thus replied:
'Your favour, gracious lords, I claim,
O'erwhelmed with this enormous shame
That Bráhmans, great and pure as you,
Who should be sought, to me should sue.'
And then before the saintly crowd,
'What can I do?' I cried aloud.
Then from the trembling hermits broke
One long sad cry, and thus they spoke:
'Fiends of the wood, who wear at will
Each varied shape, afflict us still.
To thee in our distress we fly:
O help us, Ráma, or we die.
When sacred rites of fire are due,
When changing moons are full or new,
These fiends who bleeding flesh devour
Assail us with resistless power.
They with their cruel might torment
The hermits on their vows intent:
We look around for help and see
Our surest refuge, Prince, in thee.
We, armed with powers of penance, might
Destroy the rovers of the night:
But loth were we to bring to naught
The merit years of toil have bought.
Our penance rites are grown too hard,
By many a check and trouble barred,
But though our saints for food are slain
The withering curse we yet restrain.
Thus many a weary day distressed
By giants who this wood infest,
We see at length deliverance, thou
With Lakshman art our guardian now.'
As thus the troubled hermits prayed,

I promised, dame, my ready aid,
And now—for truth I hold most dear—
Still to my word must I adhere.
My love, I might endure to be
Deprived of Lakshman, life, and thee,
But ne'er deny my promise, ne'er
To Bráhmans break the oath I sware.
I must, enforced by high constraint,
Protect them all. Each suffering saint
In me, unasked, his help had found;
Still more in one by promise bound.
I know thy words, mine own dear dame,
From thy sweet heart's affection came:
I thank thee for thy gentle speech,
For those we love are those we teach.
'Tis like thyself, O fair of face,
'Tis worthy of thy noble race:
Dearer than life, thy feet are set
In righteous paths they ne'er forget.'
Thus to the Maithil monarch's child,
His own dear wife, in accents mild
The high-souled hero spake:
Then to the holy groves which lay
Beyond them fair to see, their way
The bow-armed chieftain led.

CANTO XI.

AGASTYA.

Ráma went foremost of the three,
Next Sítá, followed, fair to see,
And Lakshman with his bow in hand
Walked hindmost of the little band.
As onward through the wood they went,
With great delight their eyes were bent
On rocky heights beside the way
And lofty trees with blossoms gay ;
And streamlets running fair and fast
The royal youths with Sítá passed.
They watched the sáras and the drake
On islets of the stream and lake,
And gazed delighted on the floods
Bright with gay birds and lotus buds.
They saw in startled herds the roes,
The passion-frenzied buffaloes,
Wild elephants who fiercely tore
The tender trees, and many a boar.
A length of woodland way they passed,
And when the sun was low at last
A lovely stream-fed lake they spied,
Two leagues across from side to side.
Tall elephants fresh beauty gave
To grassy bank and lilied wave,
By many a swan and sáras stirred,
Mallard, and gay-winged water-bird.
From those sweet waters, loud and long,

Though none was seen to wake the song,
Swelled high the singer's music blent
With each melodious instrument.
Ráma and car-borne Lakshman heard
The charming strain, with wonder stirred,
Turned on the margent of the lake
To Dharmabhrit[1] the sage, and spake:
'Our longing souls, O hermit, burn
This music of the lake to learn:
We pray thee, noblest sage, explain
The cause of the mysterious strain.'
He, as the son of Raghu prayed,
With swift accord his answer made,
And thus the hermit, virtuous-souled,
The story of the fair lake told:
'Through every age 'tis known to fame,
Panchápsaras[2] its glorious name,
By holy Máṇḍakarṇi wrought
With power his rites austere had bought.
For he, great votarist, intent
On strictest rule his stern life spent.
Ten thousand years the stream his bed,
Ten thousand years on air he fed.
Then on the blessed Gods who dwell
In heavenly homes great terror fell:
They gathered all, by Agni led,
And counselled thus disquieted:
'The hermit by ascetic pain
The seat of one of us would gain.'
Thus with their hearts by fear oppressed
In full assembly spoke the Blest,
And bade five loveliest nymphs, as fair

[1] One of the hermits who had followed Ráma.
[2] The lake of the five nymphs.

As lightning in the evening air,
Armed with their winning wiles, seduce
From his stern vows the great recluse.
Though lore of earth and heaven he knew,
The hermit from his task they drew,
And made the great ascetic slave
To conquering love, the Gods to save.
Each of the heavenly five became,
Bound to the sage, his wedded dame;
And he, for his beloved's sake,
Formed a fair palace neath the lake.
Under the flood the ladies live,
To joy and ease their days they give,
And lap in bliss the hermit wooed
From penance rites to youth renewed.
So when the sportive nymphs within
Those secret bowers their play begin,
You hear the singers' dulect tones
Blend sweetly with their tinkling zones.'

'How wondrous are these words of thine!'
Cried the famed chiefs of Raghu's line,
As thus they heard the sage unfold
The marvels of the tale he told.

As Ráma spake, his eyes were bent
Upon a hermit settlement
With light of heavenly lore endued,
With sacred grass and vesture strewed.
His wife and brother by his side,
Within the holy bounds he hied,
And there, with honour entertained
By all the saints, a while remained.
In time, by due succession led,
Each votary's cot he visited,
And then the lord of martial lore

Returned where he had lodged before.
Here for ten months, content, he stayed,
There for a year his visit paid:
Here for four months his home would fix,
There, as it chanced, for five or six.
Here for eight months and there for three
The son of Raghu's stay would be:
Here weeks, there fortnights, more or less,
He spent in tranquil happiness.
As there the hèro dwelt at ease
Among those holy devotees,
In days untroubled o'er his head
Ten circling years of pleasure fled.
So Raghu's son in duty trained
A while in every cot remained,
Then with his dame retraced the road
To good Sutíkshṇa's calm abode.
Hailed by the saints with honours due
Near to the hermit's home he drew,
And there the tamer of his foes
Dwelt for a time in sweet repose.
One day within that holy wood
By saint Sutíkshṇa Ráma stood,
And thus the prince with reverence meek
To that high sage began to speak:

'In the wide woodlands that extend
Around us, lord most reverend,
As frequent voice of rumour tells,
Agastya, saintliest hermit, dwells.
So vast the wood, I cannot trace
The path to reach his dwelling place,
Nor, searching unassisted, find
That hermit of the thoughtful mind.
I with my wife and brother fain

Would go, his favour to obtain,
Would seek him in his lone retreat
And the great saint with reverence greet.
This one desire, O Master, long
Cherished within my heart, is strong,
That I may pay of free accord
My duty to that hermit lord.'
As thus the prince whose heart was bent
On virtue told his firm intent,
The good Sutíkshṇa's joy rose high,
And thus in turn he made reply:
'The very thing, O Prince, which thou
Hast sought, I wished to urge but now,
Bid thee with wife and brother see
Agastya, glorious devotee.
I count this thing an omen fair
That thou shouldst thus thy wish declare,
And I, my Prince, will gladly teach
The way Agastya's home to reach.
Southward, dear son, direct thy feet
Eight leagues beyond this still retreat;
Agastya's hermit brother there
Dwells in a home most bright and fair.
'Tis on a knoll of woody ground,
With many a branching Pippal[1] crowned:
There sweet birds' voices ne'er are mute,
And trees are gay with flower and fruit.
There many a lake gleams bright and cool,
And lilies deck each pleasant pool,
While swan, and crane, and mallard's wings
Are lovely in the water-springs.
There for one night, O Ráma, stay,
And with the dawn pursue thy way.

[1] The holy fig tree.

Still farther, bending southward, by
The thicket's edge thy course must lie,
And thou wilt see, two leagues from thence
Agastya's lovely residence.
Set in the woodland's fairest spot,
All varied foliage decks the cot:
There Sítá, Lakshmaṇ, thou, at ease
May spend sweet hours neath shady trees,
For all of noblest growth are found
Luxuriant on that bosky ground.
If it be still thy firm intent
To see that saint preëminent,
O mighty counsellor, this day
Depart upon thine onward way.'
The hermit spake, and Ráma bent
His head, with Lakshmaṇ, reverent,
And then with him and Janak's child
Set out to trace the forest wild.
He saw dark woods that fringed the road,
And distant hills like clouds that showed,
And, as the way he followed, met
With many a lake and rivulet.
So passing on with ease where led
The path Sutíkshṇa bade him tread,
The hero with exulting breast
His brother in these words addressed:
'Here, surely, is the home, in sight,
Of that illustrious anchorite:
Here great Agastya's brother leads
A life intent on holy deeds.
Warned of each guiding mark and sign,
I see them all herein combine:
I see the branches bending low
Beneath the flowers and fruit they show.

A soft air from the forest springs,
Fresh from the odorous grass, and brings
A spicy fragrance as it flees
O'er the ripe fruit of Pippal trees.
See, here and there around us high
Piled up in heaps cleft billets lie,
And holy grass is gathered, bright
As strips of shining lazulite.
Full in the centre of the shade
The hermits' holy fire is laid:
I see its smoke the pure heaven streak
Dense as a big cloud's dusky peak.
The twice-born men their steps retrace
From each sequestered bathing-place,
And each his sacred gift has brought
Of blossoms which his hands have sought.
Of all these signs, dear brother, each
Agrees with good Sutíkshṇa's speech,
And doubtless in this holy bound
Agastya's brother will be found.
Agastya once, the worlds who viewed
With love, a Deathlike fiend subdued,
And armed with mighty power, obtained
By holy works, this grove ordained
To be a refuge and defence
From all oppressors' violence.
In days of yore within this place
Two brothers fierce of demon race,
Vátápi dire and Ilval, dwelt,
And slaughter mid the Bráhmans dealt.
A Bráhman's form, the fiend to cloak,
Fierce Ilval wore, and Sanskrit spoke,
And twice-born sages would invite
To solemnize some funeral rite.

His brother's flesh, concealed within
A ram's false shape and borrowed skin,—
As men are wont at funeral feasts,—
He dressed, and fed those gathered priests.
The holy men, unweeting ill,
Took of the food and ate their fill.
Then Ilval with a mighty shout
Exclaimed 'Vátápi, issue out.'
Soon as his brother's voice he heard,
The fiend with ram-like bleating stirred:
Rending in pieces every frame,
Forth from the dying priests he came.
So they who changed their forms at will
Thousands of Bráhmans dared to kill,—
Fierce fiends who loved each cruel deed,
And joyed on bleeding flesh to feed.
Agastya, mighty hermit, pressed
To funeral banquet like the rest,
Obedient to the Gods' appeal
Ate up the monster at a meal.
"'Tis done, 'tis done,' fierce Ilval cried,
And water for his hands supplied:
Then lifting up his voice he spake:
'Forth, brother, from thy prison break.'
Then him who called the fiend, who long
Had wrought the suffering Bráhmans wrong,
Thus thoughtful-souled Agastya, best
Of hermits, with a smile addressed:
'How, Rákshas, is the fiend empowered
To issue forth whom I devoured?
Thy brother in a ram's disguise
Is gone where Yama's kingdom lies.'

When from the words Agastya said
He knew his brother fiend was dead,

His soul on fire with vengeful rage,
Rushed the night-rover at the sage.
One lightning glance of fury, hot
As fire, the glorious hermit shot,
As the fiend neared him in his stride,
And straight, consumed to dust, he died.
In pity for the Bráhmans' plight
Agastya wrought this deed of might:
This grove which lakes and fair trees grace
Is his great brother's dwelling place.'

As Ráma thus the tale rehearsed,
And with Sumitrá's son conversed,
The setting sun his last rays shed,
And evening o'er the land was spread.
A while the princely brothers stayed
And evening rites in order paid,
Then to the holy grove they drew
And hailed the saint with honour due.
With courtesy was Ráma met
By that illustrious anchoret,
And for one night he rested there
Regaled with fruit and hermit fare.
But when the night had reached its close,
And the sun's glorious circle rose,
The son of Raghu left his bed
And to the hermit's brother said:
'Well rested in thy hermit cell,
I stand, O saint, to bid farewell;
For with thy leave I journey hence
Thy brother saint to reverence.'
'Go, Ráma go,' the sage replied:
Then from the cot the chieftain hied,
And while the pleasant grove he viewed,
The path the hermit showed, pursued.

Of every leaf, of changing hue;
Plants, trees by hundreds round him grew.
With joyous eyes he looked on all,
The Jak,[1] the wild rice, and the Sál;[2]
He saw the red Hibiscus glow,
He saw the flower-tipped creeper throw
The glory of her clusters o'er
Tall trees that loads of blossom bore.
Some, elephants had prostrate laid,
In some the monkeys leapt and played,
And through the whole wide forest rang
The charm of gay birds as they sang.
Then Ráma of the lotus eye
To Lakshman turned who followed nigh,
And thus the hero youth impressed
With Fortune's favouring signs, addressed:
'How soft the leaves of every tree,
How tame each bird and beast we see!
Soon the fair home shall we behold
Of that great hermit tranquil-souled.
The deed the good Agastya wrought
High fame throughout the world has bought:
I see, I see his calm retreat
That balms the pain of weary feet.
Where white clouds rise from flames beneath,
Where bark-coats lie with many a wreath,
Where silvan things, made gentle, throng,
And every bird is loud in song.
With ruth for suffering creatures filled,
A deathlike fiend with might he killed,
And gave this southern realm to be
A refuge, from oppression free.

[1] The bread-fruit tree, Artocarpus integrifolia.
[2] A fine timber tree, Shorea robusta.

There stands his home, whose dreaded might
Has put the giant crew to flight,
Who view with envious eyes afar
The peaceful shades they cannot mar.
Since that most holy saint has made
His dwelling in this lovely shade,
Checked by his might the giant brood
Have dwelt in peace with souls subdued.
And all this southern realm, within
Whose bounds no fiend may entrance win,
Now bears a name which naught may dim,
Made glorious through the worlds by him.
When Vindhya, best of hills, would stay
The journey of the Lord of Day,
Obedient to the saint's behest
He bowed for aye his humbled crest.
That hoary hermit, world-renowned
For holy deeds, within this ground
Has set his pure and blessed home,
Where gentle silvan creatures roam.
Agastya, whom the worlds revere,
Pure saint to whom the good are dear,
To us his guests all grace will show,
Enriched with blessings ere we go.
I to this aim each thought will turn,
The favour of the saint to earn,
That here in comfort may be spent
The last years of our banishment.
Here sanctities and high saints stand,
Gods, minstrels of the heavenly band;
Upon Agastya's will they wait,
And serve him, pure and temperate.
The liar's tongue, the tyrant's mind
Within these bounds no home may find:

No cheat, no sinner here can be:
So holy and so good is he.
Here birds and lords of serpent race,
Spirits and Gods who haunt the place,
Content with scanty fare remain,
As merit's meed they strive to gain.
Made perfect here, the saints supreme,
On cars that mock the Day-God's gleam,—
Their mortal bodies cast aside,—
Sought heaven transformed and glorified.
Here Gods to living things, who win
Their favour, pure from cruel sin,
Give royal rule and many a good,
Immortal life and spirithood.
Now, Lakshmaṇ, we are near the place:
Do thou precede a little space,
And tell the mighty saint that I
With Sítá at my side am nigh.'

CANTO XII.

THE HEAVENLY BOW.

He spoke: the younger prince obeyed:
Within the bounds his way he made,
And thus addressed, whom first he met,
A pupil of the anchoret:
'Brave Rámа, eldest born, who springs
From Daśaratha, hither brings
His wife the lady Sítá: he
Would fain the holy hermit see.
Lakshmaṇ am I—if haply fame
E'er to thine ears has brought the name—
His younger brother, prompt to do
His will, devoted, fond, and true.
We, through our royal sire's decree,
To the dread woods were forced to flee.
Tell the great Master, I entreat,
Our earnest wish our lord to greet.'
He spoke: the hermit rich in store
Of fervid zeal and sacred lore,
Sought the pure shrine which held the fire,
To bear his message to the sire.
Soon as he reached the saint most bright
In sanctity's surpassing might,
He cried, uplifting reverent hands:
'Lord Rámа near thy cottage stands.'
Then spoke Agastya's pupil dear
The message for his lord to hear:
'Rámа and Lakshmaṇ, chiefs who spring

From Daśaratha, glorious king,
Thy hermitage e'en now have sought,
And lady Sítá with them brought.
The tamers of the foe are here
To see thee, Master, and revere.
'Tis thine thy further will to say:
Deign to command, and we obey.'

When from his pupil's lips he knew
The presence of the princely two,
And Sítá born to fortune high,
The glorious hermit made reply:
'Great joy at last is mine this day
That Ráma hither finds his way,
For long my soul has yearned to see
The prince who comes to visit me.
Go forth, go forth, and hither bring
The royal three with welcoming:
Lead Ráma in and place him near:
Why stands he not already here?'

Thus ordered by the hermit, who,
Lord of high thoughts, all duty knew,
His reverent hands together laid,
The pupil answered and obeyed.
Forth from the place with speed he ran,
To Lakshman came and thus began:
'Where is he? Let not Ráma wait,
But speed, the sage to venerate.'

Then with the pupil Lakshman went
Across the hermit settlement,
And showed him Ráma where he stood
With Janak's daughter in the wood.
The pupil then his message spake
Which the kind hermit bade him take;
Then led the honoured Ráma thence

And brought him in with reverence.
As nigh the royal Ráma came
With Lakshmaṇ and the Maithil dame,
He viewed the herds of gentle deer
Roaming the garden free from fear.
As through the sacred grove he trod
He viewed the seat of many a God,
Brahmá and Agni,[1] Sun and Moon,
And His who sends each golden boon ;[2]
Here Vishṇu's stood, there Bhaga's[3] shrine,
And there Mahendra's, Lord divine ;
Here His who formed this earthly frame,[4]
His there from whom all beings came.[5]
Váyu's,[6] and His who loves to hold
The great noose, Varuṇ[7] mighty-souled:
Here was the Vasus'[8] shrine to see,
Here that of sacred Gáyatrí,[9]
The King of serpents[10] here had place,
And he who rules the feathered race.[11]
Here Kártikeya,[12] warrior lord,
And there was Justice' King adored.
Then with disciples girt about
The mighty saint himself came out :
Through fierce devotion bright as flame
Before the rest the Master came :

[1] The God of fire.
[2] Kuvera, the God of riches.
[3] The Sun.
[4] Brahmá, the creator.
[5] Śiva.
[6] The Wind-God.
[7] The God of the sea.
[8] A class of demi-gods, eight in number.
[9] The holiest text of the Vedas, deified.
[10] Vásuki.
[11] Garud.
[12] The War-God.

And then to Lakshmaṇ, fortune-blest,
Ráma these hasty words addresssed :
'Behold, Agastya's self draws near,
The mighty saint whom all revere :
With spirit raised I meet my lord
With richest wealth of penance stored.'
The strong-armed hero spake, and ran
Forward to meet the sunbright man.
Before him, as he came, he bent
And clasped his feet most reverent,
Then rearing up his stately height
Stood suppliant by the anchorite,
While Lakshmaṇ's strength and Sitá's grace
Stood by the pride of Raghu's race.
The sage his arms round Ráma threw
And welcomed him with honours due,
Asked, was all well, with question sweet,
And bade the hero to a seat.
With holy oil he fed the flame,
He brought the gifts which strangers claim,
And kindly waiting on the three
With honours due to high degree,
He gave with hospitable care
A simple hermit's woodland fare.
Then sat the reverend father, first
Of hermits, deep in duty versed,
And thus to suppliant Ráma, bred
In all the lore of virtue, said :
'Did the false hermit, Prince, neglect
To hail his guest with due respect,
He must,—the doom the perjured meet,—
His proper flesh hereafter eat.
A car-borne king, a lord who sways
The earth, and virtue's law obeys,

Worthy of highest honour, thou
Hast sought, dear guest, my cottage now.'
He spoke: with fruit and hermit fare,
With every bloom the branches bare,
Agastya graced his honoured guest,
And thus with gentle words addressed:
'Accept this mighty bow, divine,
Whereon red gold and diamonds shine;
'Twas by the Heavenly Artist planned
For Vishṇu's own almighty hand;
This God-sent shaft of sunbright hue,
Whose deadly flight is ever true,
By Lord Mahendra given of yore:
This quiver with its endless store,
Keen arrows hurtling to their aim
Like kindled fires that flash and flame:
Accept, in golden sheath encased,
This sword with hilt of rich gold graced.
Armed, whilom, with this best of bows
Lord Vishṇu slew his demon foes,
And mid the dwellers in the skies
Won brilliant glory for his prize.
The bow, the quivers, shaft, and sword
Receive from me, O glorious lord:
These conquest to thine arm shall bring,
As thunder to the thunder's King.'
The splendid hermit bade him take
The noble weapons as he spake,
And as the prince accepted each
In words like these renewed his speech:

CANTO XIII.

AGASTYA'S COUNSEL.

'O Rámа, great delight I feel,
Pleased, Lakshman, with thy faithful zeal,
That you within these shades I see
With Sítá come to honour me.
But wandering through the rough rude wild
Has wearied Janak's gentle child:
With labours of the way oppressed
The Maithil lady longs for rest.
Young, delicate, and soft, and fair,
Such toils as these untrained to bear,
Her wifely love the dame has led
The forest's troubled ways to tread.
Here, Rámа, see that naught annoy
Her easy hours of tranquil joy:
A glorious task has she assayed,
To follow thee through woodland shade.
Since first from Nature's hand she came,
A woman's mood is still the same,
When Fortune smiles, her love to show,
And leave her lord in want and woe.
No pity then her heart can feel,
She arms her soul with warrior's steel,
Swift as the storm or Feathered King,
Uncertain as the lightning's wing.
Not so thy spouse: her purer mind
Shrinks from the faults of womankind:

Like chaste Arundhatí[1] above,
A paragon of faithful love.
Let these blest shades, dear Ráma, be
A home for Lakshmaṇ, her, and thee.'

With raised hands reverently meek
He heard the holy hermit speak,
And humbly thus addressed the sire
Whose glory shone like kindled fire:
'How blest am I, what thanks I owe
That our great Master deigns to show
His favour, that his heart can be
Content with Lakshmaṇ, Sítá, me.
Show me, I pray, some spot of ground
Where thick trees wave and springs abound,
That I may raise my hermit cell
And there in tranquil pleasure dwell.'
Then thus replied Agastya, best
Of hermits, to the chief's request:
When for a little he had bent
His thoughts, upon that prayer intent:
'Beloved son, four leagues away
Is Panchavaṭí, bright and gay:
Thronged with its deer, most fair it looks
With berries, fruit, and water-brooks.
There build thee with thy brother's aid
A cottage in the quiet shade,
And faithful to thy sire's behest,
Obedient to the sentence, rest.
For well, O sinless chieftain, well
I know thy tale, how all befell:
Stern penance and the love I bore
Thy royal sire supply the lore.

[1] One of the Pleiades generally regarded as the model of wifely excellence.

To me long rites and fervid zeal
The wish that stirs thy heart reveal,
And hence my guest I bade thee be,
That this pure grove might shelter thee.
So now, thereafter, thus I speak:
The shades of Panchavaṭí seek;
That tranquil spot is bright and fair,
And Sítá will be happy there.
Not far remote from here it lies,
A grove to charm thy loving eyes.
Godávarí's pure stream is nigh:
There Sítá's days will sweetly fly.
Pure, lovely, rich in many a charm,
O hero of the mighty arm,
'Tis gay with every plant and fruit,
And throngs of gay birds never mute.
Thou, true to virtue's path, hast might
To screen each trusting anchorite,
And wilt from thy new home defend
The hermits who on thee depend.
Now yonder, Prince, direct thine eyes
Where dense Madhúka[1] woods arise:
Pierce their dark shade, and issuing forth
Turn to a fig-tree on the north:
Then onward up a sloping mead
Flanked by a hill the way will lead:
There Panchavaṭí, ever gay
With ceaseless bloom, thy steps will stay.'
The hermit ceased: the princely two
With seemly honours bade adieu:
With reverential awe each youth
Bowed to the saint whose word was truth,

[1] The Madhúka, or, as it is now called, Mahuwá, is the Bassia latifolia, a tree from whose blossoms a spirit is extracted.

And then, dismissed with Sítá, they
To Panchavaṭí took their way.
Thus when each royal prince had grasped
His warrior's mighty bow, and clasped
His quiver to his side,
With watchful eyes along the road
The glorious saint Agastya showed,
Dauntless in fight the brothers strode,
And Sítá with them hied.

CANTO XIV.

JAṬÁYUS.

Then as the son of Raghu made
His way to Panchavaṭí's shade,
A mighty vulture he beheld
Of size and strength unparalleled.
The princes, when the bird they saw,
Approached with reverence and awe,
And as his giant form they eyed,
'Tell who thou art,' in wonder cried.
The bird, as though their hearts to gain,
Addressed them thus in gentlest strain:
'In me, dear sons, the friend behold
Your royal father loved of old.'
He spoke: nor long did Ráma wait
His sire's dear friend to venerate:
He bade the bird declare his name
And the high race of which he came.
When Raghu's son had spoken, he
Declared his name and pedigree,
His words prolonging to disclose
How all the things that be arose:
'List while I tell, O Raghu's son,
The first-born Fathers, one by one,
Great Lords of Life, whence all in earth
And all in heaven derive their birth.
First Kardam heads the glorious race
Where Vikrit holds the second place,
With Śesha, Sanśray next in line.

And Bahuputra's might divine.
Then Sthánu and Maríchi came,
Atri, and Kratu's forceful frame.
Pulastya followed, next to him
Angiras' name shall ne'er be dim.
Prachetas, Pulah next, and then
Daksha, Vivasvat praised of men:
Arishṭanemi next, and last
Kaśyap in glory umsurpassed.
From Ḍaksha,—fame the tale has told—
Three-score bright daughters sprang of old:
Of these fair-waisted nymphs the great
Lord Kaśyap sought and wedded eight,
Aditi, Diti, Kálaká,
Ṭámrá, Danú, and Analá,
And Krodhavaśá swift to ire,
And Manu[1] glorious as her sire.
Then when the mighty Kaśyap cried
Delighted to each tender bride:
'Sons shalt thou bear, to rule the three
Great worlds, in might resembling me,'
Adite, Diti, and Danú
Obeyed his will as consorts true,

[1] 'I should have doubted whether Manu could have been the right reading here, but that it occurs again in verse 29, where it is in like manner followed in verse 31 by Analá, so that it would certainly seem that the name Manu is intended to stand for a female, the daughter of Daksha. The Gauda recension, followed by Signor Gorresio (III. 20, 12), adopts an entirely different reading at the end of the line, viz. *Balám Atibalám api*, "Balá and Atibilá," instead of Manu and Analá. I see that Professor Roth s. v. adduces the authority of the Amara Kosha and of the Commentator on Páṇini for stating that the word sometimes means "the wife of Manu." In the following text of the Mahábhárata I. 2553, also, Manu appears to be the name of a female: *Anavadyám, Manum, Vañsám, Asurám, Márgaṇapriyám, Anúpám, Subhagám, Bhásim iti Prádhá vyajáyata* ‖ "Prádhá (daughter of Daksha) bore Anavadyá, Manu, Vañsá, Márgaṇapriyá, Anúpá, Subhagá, and Bhásí. *Muir's Sanskrit Texts*, Vol. I. p. 116.

And Kálaká; but all the rest
Refused to hear their lord's behest.
First Aditi conceived, and she,
Mother of thirty Gods and three,
The Vasus and Ádityas bare,
Rudras, and Aśvins, heavenly pair.
Of Dïti sprang the Daityas: fame
Delights to laud their ancient name.
In days of yore their empire dread
O'er earth and woods and ocean spread.
Danú was mother of a child,
O hero, Aśvagríva styled,
And Narak next and Kálak came
Of Kálaká, celestial dame.
Of Támrá, too, five daughters bright
In deathless glory sprang to light.
Ennobling fame still keeps alive
The titles of the lovely five:
Immortal honour still she claims
For Kraunchí, Bhásí, Śyení's names,
And wills not that the world forget
Śukí or Dhritaráshṭrí yet.
Then Kraunchí bare the crane and owl,
And Bhásí tribes of water fowl:
Vultures and hawks that race through air
With storm-fleet pinions Śyení bare.
All swans and geese on mere and brook
Their birth from Dhritaráshṭrí took,
And all the river-haunting brood
Of ducks, a countless multitude.
From Śukí Nalá sprang, who bare
Dame Vinatá surpassing fair.
From fiery Krodhavaśá ten
Bright daughters sprang, O King of men:

Mrigí and Mrigamandá named,
Harí and Bhadramadá famed,
Śárdúlí, Śvetá fair to see,
Mátangí bright, and Surabhí,
Sarasá marked with each fair sign,
And Kadrumá, all maids divine.
Mrigí, O Prince without a peer,
Was mother of the herds of deer.
The bear, the Yak, the mountain roe
Their birth to Mrigamandá owe;
And Bhadramadá joyed to be
Mother of fair Irávatí,
Who bare Airávat,[1] huge of mould,
Mid warders of the earth enrolled.
From Harí lordly lions trace,
With monkeys of the wild, their race.
From the great dame Śárdúlí styled
Sprang pards, Lángúrs,[2] and tigers wild.
Mátangí, Prince, gave birth to all
Mátangas, elephants strong and tall,
And Śvetá bore the beasts who stand
One at each wind, earth's warder band.[3]
Next Surabhí the Goddess bore
Two heavenly maids, O Prince, of yore,
Gandharví—dear to fame is she—
And her sweet sister Rohiní.
With kine this daughter filled each mead,
And bright Gandharví bore the steed.[4]

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[1] The elephant of Indra.

[2] *Golángúlas*, described as a kind of monkey, of a black colour, and having a tail like a cow.

[3] Eight elephants attached to the four quarters and intermediate points of the compass, to support and guard the earth.

[4] Some scholars identify the centaurs with the Gandharvas.

Surasá bore the serpents :[1] all
The snakes Kadrú their mother call.
Then Manu, high-souled Kaśyap's[2] wife,
To all the race of men gave life,
The Bráhmans first, the Kshatriya caste,
Then Vaiśyas, and the Śúdras last.
Sprang from her mouth the Bráhman race;
Her chest the Kshatriyas' natal place:
The Vaiśyas from her thighs, 'tis said,
The Śúdras from her feet were bred.
From Analá all trees that hang
Their fair fruit-laden branches sprang.
The child of beauteous Śukí bore
Vinatá, as I taught before:
And Surasá and Kadrú were
Born of one dame, a noble pair.
Kadrú gave birth to countless snakes
That roam the earth in woods and brakes.
Aruṇ and Garuḍ swift of flight
By Vinatá were given to light,
And sons of Aruṇ red as morn
Sampáti first, then I was born.
Me then, O tamer of the foe,
Jaṭáyus, son of Śyeni, know.
Thy ready helper will I be,
And guard thy house, if thou agree:
When thou and Lakshmaṇ urge the chase

[1] 'The hooded serpents, says the commentator Tírtha, were the offspring of Surasá: all others of Kadrú.

[2] 'The text reads Káśyapa, "a descendant of Kaśyapa," who according to Rám. II. 110, 6, ought to be Vivasvat. But as it is stated in the preceding part of this passage III. 14, 11 f. that Manu was one of Kaśyapa's eight wives, we must here read Kaśyapa. The Gauḍa recension reads (III. 20, 30) *Manur manushyáṁs cha tathá janayámása Rághava*, instead of the corresponding line in the Bombay edition.' *Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. I. p.* 117.

By Sítá's side shall be my place.'
With courteous thanks for promised aid,
The prince, to rapture stirred,
Bent low, and due obeisance paid,
Embraced the royal bird.
He often in the days gone by
Had heard his father tell
How, linked with him in friendship's tie,
He loved Jaṭáyus well.
He hastened to his trusted friend
His darling to confide,
And through the wood his steps to bend
By strong Jaṭáyus' side.
On to the grove, with Lakshman near,
The prince his way pursued,
To free those pleasant shades from fear
And slay the giant brood.

CANTO XV.

PANCHAVAṬÍ.

Arrived at Panchavaṭí's shade
Where silvan life and serpents strayed,
Ráma in words like these addressed
Lakshmaṇ of vigour unrepressed:
'Brother, our home is here: behold
The grove of which the hermit told:
The bowers of Panchavaṭí see
Made fair by every blooming tree.
Now, brother, bend thine eyes around;
With skilful glance survey the ground:
Here be some spot selected, best
Approved for gentle hermits' rest,
Where thou, the Maithil dame, and I
May dwell while seasons sweetly fly.
Some pleasant spot be chosen where
Pure waters gleam and trees are fair,
Some nook where flowers and wood are found
And sacred grass and springs abound.'
Then Lakshmaṇ, Sítá standing by,
Raised reverent hands, and made reply:
'A hundred years shall flee, and still
Will I obey my brother's will:
Select thyself a pleasant spot;
Be mine the care to rear the cot.'
The glorious chieftain, pleased to hêar
That loving speech that soothed his ear,
Selected with observant care

A spot with every charm most fair.
He stood within that calm retreat,
A shade for hermits' home most meet,
And thus Sumitrá's son addressed,
While his dear hand in his he pressed:
'See, see this smooth and lovely glade
Which flowery trees encircling shade:
Do thou, beloved Lakshman, rear
A pleasant cot to lodge us here.
I see beyond that feathery brake
The gleaming of a lilied lake,
Where flowers in sunlike glory throw
Fresh odours from the wave below.
Agastya's words now find we true,
He told the charms which here we view:
Here are the trees that blossom o'er
Godávarí's most lovely shore,
Whose pleasant flood from side to side
With swans and geese is beautified,
And fair banks crowded with the deer
That steal from every covert near.
The peacock's cry is loud and shrill
From many a tall and lovely hill,
Green-belted by the trees that wave
Full blossoms o'er the rock and cave.
Like elephants whose huge fronts glow
With painted streaks, the mountains show
Long lines of gold and silver sheen
With copper's darker hues between.
With every tree each hill is graced,
Where creepers blossom interlaced.
Look where the Sál's long branches sway,
And palms their fanlike leaves display;
The date-tree and the Jak are near,

And their long stems Tamálas rear.
See the tall Mango lift his head,
Aśokas all their glory spread,
The Ketak her sweet buds unfold,
And Champacs hang their cups of gold.[1]
The spot is pure and pleasant: here
Are multitudes of birds and deer.
O Lakshman, with our father's friend
What happy hours we here shall spend!'
He spoke: the conquering Lakshman heard,
Obedient to his brother's word.
Raised by his toil a cottage stood
To shelter Ráma in the wood.
Of ample size, with leaves o'erlaid,
Of hardened earth the walls were made.
The strong bamboos his hands had felled
For pillars fair the roof upheld,
And rafter, beam, and lath supplied
Well interwrought from side to side.
Then Śamí[2] boughs he deftly spread
Enlaced with knotted cord o'erhead,
Well thatched above from ridge to eaves
With holy grass, and reed, and leaves.
The mighty chief with careful toil
Had cleared the ground and smoothed the soil
Where now, his loving labour done,
Rose a fair home for Raghu's son.

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[1] The original verses merely name the trees. I have been obliged to amplify slightly and to omit some 'quas versu dicere non est;' *e. g.* the *tiniśa* (Dalbergia oug iniensis), *punnâga* (Rottlera tinctoria) *tilaka* (not named), *syandana* (Dalbergia ougeiniensis again) *vandana* (unknown) *nîpa* Nauclea Kadamba) *lakucha* (Artocarpus lacucha), *dhava* (Grisler tomentosa) Aśvakarṇa (mother name for the Sál), *Śamî* (Acacia Suma) *khadira* (Mimosa catechu) *kuṭaja* (Butea frondosa) *pâṭala* Bignonia suaveolens).

[2] Acacia Suma

Then when his work was duly wrought,
Godávarí's sweet stream he sought,
Bathed, plucked the lilies, and a store
Of fruit and berries homeward bore.
Then sacrifice he duly paid,
And wooed the Gods their hopes to aid,
And then to Ráma proudly showed
The cot prepared for his abode.
Then Raghu's son with Sítá gazed
Upon the home his hands had raised,
And transport thrilled his bosom through
His leafy hermitage to view.
The glorious son of Raghu round
His brother's neck his arms enwound,
And thus began his sweet address
Of deep-felt joy and gentleness:
'Well pleased am I, dear lord, to see
This noble work performed by thee.
For this,—sole grace I can bestow,—
About thy neck mine arms I throw.
So wise art thou, thy breast is filled
With grateful thoughts, in duty skilled,
Our mighty father, free from stain,
In thee, his offspring, lives again.'
Thus spoke the prince who lent a grace
To fortune, pride of Raghu's race;
Then in that spot whose pleasant shade
Gave store of fruit, content he stayed.
With Lakshman and his Maithil spouse
He spent his days neath sheltering boughs,
As happy as a God on high
Lives in his mansion in the sky.

CANTO XVI.

WINTER.

While there the high-souled hero spent
His tranquil hours in sweet content,
The glowing autumn passed, and then
Came winter so beloved of men.
One morn, to bathe, at break of day
To the fair stream he took his way.
Behind him, with the Maithil dame,
Bearing a pitcher Lakshman came,
And as he went the mighty man
Thus to his brother chief began:
'The time is come, to thee more dear
Than all the months that mark the year:
The gracious seasons' joy and pride,
By which the rest are glorified.
A robe of hoary rime is spread
O'er earth, with corn engarlanded.
The streams we loved no longer please,
But near the fire we take our ease.
Now pious men to God and shade
Offer young corn's fresh sprouted blade,
And purge away their sins with rice
Bestowed in humble sacrifice.
Rich stores of milk delight the swain,
And hearts are cheered that longed for gain.
Proud kings whose breasts for conquests glow
Lead bannered troops to smite the foe.
Dark is the north: the Lord of Day

To Yama's south[1] has turned away:
And she—sad widow—shines no more,
Reft of the bridal mark[2] she wore.
Himálaya's hill, ordained of old
The treasure-house of frost and cold,
Scarce conscious of the feebler glow,
Is truly now the Lord of Snow.
Warmed by the noontide's genial rays
Delightful are the glorious days:
But how we shudder at the chill
Of evening shadows and the rill!
How weak the sun, how cold the breeze!
How white the rime on grass and trees!
The leaves are sere, the woods have lost
Their blossoms killed by nipping frost.
Neath open skies we sleep no more:
December's nights with rime are hoar:
Their triple watch[3] in length extends
With hours the shortened daylight lends.
No more the moon's sun-borrowed rays
Are bright, involved in misty haze,
As when upon the mirror's sheen
The breath's obscuring cloud is seen.
E'en at the full the faint beams fail
To struggle through the darksome veil:
Changed like her hue, they want the grace
That parts not yet from Sítá's face.
Cold is the western wind, but how
Its piercing chill is heightened now,
Blowing at early morning twice
As furious with its breath of ice!
See how the dewy tears they weep

[1] The south is supposed to be the residence of the departed.
[2] The sun.
[3] The night is divided into three watches of four hours each.

The barley, wheat, and woodland steep,
Where, as the sun goes up the sky.
The curlew and the sáras cry.
See where the rice plants scarce uphold
Their full ears tinged with paly gold,
Bending their ripe heads slowly down
Fair as the date tree's flowery crown.
Though now the sun has mounted high
Seeking the forehead of the sky,
Such mist obscures his struggling beams,
No bigger than the moon he seems.
Though weak at first, his rays at length
Grow pleasant in their noonday strength,
And where a while they chance to fall
Fling a faint splendour over all.
See, o'er the woods where grass is wet
With hoary drops that cling there yet,
With soft light clothing earth and bough
There steals a tender glory now.
You elephant who longs to drink,
Still standing on the river's brink,
Plucks back his trunk in shivering haste
From the cold wave he fain would taste.
The very fowl that haunt the mere
Stand doubtful on the bank, and fear
To dip them in the wintry wave
As cowards dread to meet the brave.
The frost of night, the rime of dawn
Bind flowerless trees and glades of lawn:
Benumbed in apathetic chill
Of icy chains they slumber still.
You hear the hidden sáras cry
From floods that wrapped in vapour lie,
And frosty-shining sands reveal

Where the unnoticed rivers steal.
The hoary rime of dewy night,
And suns that glow with tempered light
Lend fresh cool flavours to the rill
That sparkles from the topmost hill.
The cold has killed the lily's pride:
Leaf, filament, and flower have died:
With chilling breath rude winds have blown,
The withered stalk is left alone.
At this gay time, O noblest chief,
The faithful Bharat, worn by grief,
Lives in the royal town where he
Spends weary hours for love of thee.
From titles, honour, kingly sway,
From every joy he turns away:
Couched on cold earth, his days are passed
With scanty fare and hermit's fast.
This moment from his humble bed
He lifts, perhaps, his weary head,
And girt by many a follower goes
To bathe where silver Sarjú flows.
How, when the frosty morn is dim,
Shall Sarjú be a bath for him
Nursed with all love and tender care,
So delicate and young and fair?
How bright his hue! his brilliant eye
With the broad lotus leaf may vie.
By Fortune stamped for happy fate,
His graceful fôrm is tall and straight.
In duty skilled, his words are truth:
He proudly rules each lust of youth.
Though his strong arm smites down the foe,
In gentle speech his accents flow.
Yet every joy has he resigned

And cleaves to thee with heart and mind.
Thus by the deeds that he has done
A home in heaven has Bharat won,
For in his life he follows yet
Thy steps, O banished anchoret.
Thus faithful Bharat, nobly wise,
The proverb of the world belies:
'No men, by mothers' guidance led,
The footsteps of their fathers tread.'
How could Kaikeyí, blest to be
Spouse of the king our sire, and see
A son like virtuous Bharat, blot
Her glory with so foul a plot!'
Thus in fraternal love he spoke,
And from his lips reproaches broke:
But Ráma grieved to hear him chide
The absent mother, and replied:
'Cease, O beloved, cease to blame
Our royal father's second dame.
Still speak of Bharat first in place
Of old Ikshváku's princely race.
My heart, so firmly bent but now
To dwell in woods and keep my vow,
Half melting as I hear thee speak
Of Bharat's love, grows soft and weak.
With tender joy I bring to mind
His speeches ever sweet and kind,
That dear as Amrit took the sense
With most enchanting influence.
Ah, when shall I, no more to part,
Meet Bharat of the mighty heart?
When, O my brother, when shall we
The good and brave Śatrughna see?'
Thus as he poured his fond lament

The son of Raghu onward went:
They reached the river, and the three
Bathed them in fair Godávarí.
Libations of the stream they paid
To every deity and shade,
With hymns of praise, the Sun on high
And sinless Gods to glorify.
Fresh from the purifying tide
Resplendent Ráma came,
With Lakshman ever by his side,
And the sweet Maithil dame.
So Rudra shines by worlds adored,
In glory undefiled,
When Nandi[1] stands beside his lord,
And King Himálaya's child.[2]

[1] The chief chamberlain and attendant of Śiva or Rudra.

[2] Umá or Párvati, the consort of Śiva.

CANTO XVII.

ŚÚRPAṆAKHÁ.

The bathing and the prayer were o'er:
He turned him from the grassy shore,
And with his brother and his spouse
Sought his fair home beneath the boughs.
Sítá and Lakshmaṇ by his side,
On to his cot the hero hied,
And after rites at morning due
Within the leafy shade withdrew.
Then, honoured by the devotees,
As royal Ráma sat at ease,
With Sítá near him, o'er his head
A canopy of green boughs spread,
He shone as shines the Lord of Night
By Chitrá's[1] side, his dear delight.
With Lakshmaṇ there he sat and told
Sweet stories of the days of old,
And as the pleasant time he spent
With heart upon each tale intent,
A giantess, by fancy led,
Came wandering to his leafy shed.
Fierce Súrpaṇakhá,—her of yore
The Ten-necked tyrant's mother bore,—
Saw Ráma with his noble mien
Bright as the Gods in heaven are seen;
Him from whose brow a glory gleamed,
Like lotus leaves his full eyes blamed:

[1] A star, one of the favourites of the Moon.

Long-armed, of elephantine gait,
With hair close coiled in hermit plait:
In youthful vigour, nobly framed,
By glorious marks a king proclaimed:
Like some bright lotus lustrous-hued,
With young Kandarpa's [1] grace endued:
As there like Indra's self he shone,
She loved the youth she gazed upon.
She grim of eye and foul of face
Loved his sweet glance and forehead's grace:
She of unlovely figure, him
Of stately form and shapely limb:
She whose dim locks disordered hung,
Him whose bright hair on high brows clung:
She whose fierce accents counselled fear,
Him whose soft tones were sweet to hear:
She whose dire form with age was dried,
Him radiant in his youthful pride:
She whose false lips maintained the wrong,
Him in the words of virtue strong:
She cruel-hearted, stained with sin,
Him just in deed and pure within:
She, hideous fiend, a thing to hate,
Him formed each eye to captivate:
Fierce passion in her bosom woke,
And thus to Raghu's son she spoke:

'With matted hair above thy brows,
With bow and shaft and this thy spouse,
How hast thou sought in hermit dress
The giant-haunted wilderness?
What dost thou here? The cause explain:
Why art thou come, and what to gain?'

As Śúrpaṇakhá questioned so,

[1] The God of love.

Ráma, the terror of the foe,
In answer to the monster's call,
With fearless candour told her all.
'King Daśaratha reigned of old,
Like Gods celestial brave and bold.
I am his eldest son and heir,
And Ráma is the name I bear.
This brother, Lakshmaṇ, younger born,
Most faithful love to me has sworn.
My wife, this princess, dear to fame,
Is Sítá the Videhan dame.
Obedient to my sire's behest
And by the queen my mother pressed,
To keep the law and merit win,
I sought this wood to harbour in.
But speak, for I of thee in turn
Thy name, and race, and sire would learn.
Thou art of giant race, I ween,
Changing at will thy form and mien.
Speak truly, and the cause declare
That bids thee to these shades repair,'
Thus Ráma spoke: the demon heard,
And thus replied by passion spurred:
'Of giant race, what form soe'er
My fancy wills, 'tis mine to wear.
Named Súrpaṇakhá here I stray,
And where I walk spread wild dismay.
King Rávaṇ is my brother: fame
Has taught perchance his dreaded name.
Strong Kumbhakarṇa slumbering deep
In chains of never-ending sleep:
Vibhíshaṇ of the duteous mind,
In needs unlike his giant kind:
Dúshaṇ and Khara, brave and bold

Whose fame by every tongue is told:
Their might by mine is far surpassed:
But when, O best of men, I cast
These fond eyes on thy form, I see
My chosen love and lord in thee.
Endowed with wondrous might am I:
Where'er my fancy leads I fly.
The poor misshapen Sítá leave,
And me, thy worthier bride, receive.
Look on my beauty, and prefer
A spouse more meet than one like her:
I'll eat that ill-formed woman there:
Thy brother too her fate shall share.
But come, beloved; thou shalt roam
With me through all our woodland home:
Each varied grove with me shalt seek,
And gaze upon each mountain peak.'

As thus she spoke, the monster gazed
With sparkling eyes where passion blazed:
Then he, in lore of language learned,
This answer eloquent returned:

CANTO XVIII.

THE MUTILATION.

On her ensnared in Káma's net
His eyes the royal Ráma set,
And thus, her passion to beguile,
Addressed her with a gentle smile:
'I have a wife: behold her here,
My Sítá ever true and dear:
And one like thee will never brook
Upon a rival spouse to look.
But there my brother Lakshmaṇ stands:
Unchained is he by nuptial bands:
A youth heroic, loved of all,
Gracious and gallant, fair and tall.
With winning looks, most nobly bred,
Unmatched till now, he longs to wed.
Meet to enjoy thy youthful charms,
O take him to thy loving arms.
Enamoured on his bosom lie,
Fair damsel of the radiant eye,
As the warm sunlight loves to rest
Upon her darling Meru's breast.'
The hero spoke, the monster heard,
While passion still her bosom stirred.
Away from Ráma's side she broke,
And thus in turn to Lakshmaṇ spoke:
'Come, for thy bride take me who shine
In fairest grace that suits with thine.
Thou by my side from grove to grove

Of Daṇḍak's wild in bliss shalt rove.'
Then Lakshmaṇ, skilled in soft address,
Wooed by the amorous giantess,
With art to turn her love aside,
To Súrpaṇakhí thus replied:
'And can so high a dame agree
The slave-wife of a slave to be?
I, lotus-hued! in good and ill
Am bondsman to my brother's will.
Be thou, fair creature, radiant-eyed,
My honoured brother's younger bride:
With faultless tint and dainty limb,
A happy wife, bring joy to him.
He from his spouse grown old and grey,
Deformed, untrue, will turn away,
Her withered charms will gladly leave,
And to his fair young darling cleave.
For who could be so fond and blind,
O loveliest of all female kind,
To love another dame and slight
Thy beauties rich in all delight?'
Thus Lakshmaṇ praised in scornful jest
The long-toothed fiend with loathly breast,
Who fondly heard his speech, nor knew
His mocking words were aught but true.
Again inflamed with love she fled
To Ráma in his leafy shed
Where Sítá rested by his side,
And to the mighty victor cried:
'What, Ráma, canst thou blindly cling
To this old false misshapen thing?
Wilt thou refuse the charms of youth
For withered breast and grinning tooth?
Canst thou this wretched creature prize

And look on me with scornful eyes ?
This aged crone this very hour
Before thy face will I devour:
Then joyous, from all rivals free,
Through Daṇḍak will I stray with thee.'
She spoke, and with a glance of flame
Rushed on the fawn-eyed Maithil dame:
So would a horrid meteor mar
Fair Rohiṇí's soft-beaming star.
But as the furious fiend drew near,
Like Death's dire noose which chills with fear,
The mighty chief her purpose stayed,
And spoke, his brother to upbraid:
'Ne'er should we jest with creatures rude,
Of savage race and wrathful mood.
Think, Lakshmaṇ, think how nearly slain
My dear Videhan breathes again.
Let not the hideous wretch escape
Without a mark to mar her shape.
Strike, lord of men, the moustrous fiend,
Deformed, and foul, and evil-mienèd.'
He spoke: then Lakshmaṇ's wrath rose high,
And there before his brother's eye,
He drew that sword which none could stay,
And cleft her nose and ears away.
Noseless and earless, torn and maimed,
With fearful shrieks the fiend exclaimed,
And frantic in her wild distress
Resought the distant wilderness.
Deformed, terrific, huge, and dread,
As on she moved, her gashes bled,
And groan succeeded groan as loud
As roars, ere rain, the thunder cloud
Still on the fearful monster passed

While streams of blood kept falling fast,
And with a roar, and arms outspread
Within the boundless wood she fled.
To Janasthán the monster flew:
Fierce Khara there she found
With chieftains of the giant crew
In thousands ranged around.
Before his awful feet she bent
And fell with piercing cries,
As when a bolt in swift descent
Comes flashing from the skies.
There for a while with senses dazed
Silent she lay and scared:
At length her drooping head she raised,
And all the tale declared,
How Ráma, Lakshman, and the dame
Had reached that lonely place:
Then told her injuries and shame,
And showed her bleeding face.

CANTO XIX.

THE ROUSING OF KHARA.

When Khara saw his sister lie
With blood-stained limbs and troubled eye,
Wild fury in his bosom woke,
And thus the monstrous giant spoke:
'Arise, my sister; cast away
This numbing terror and dismay,
And straight the impious hand declare
That marred those features once so fair.
For who his finger tip will lay
On the black snake in childish play,
And, unattacked, with idle stroke
His poison-laden fang provoke?
Ill-fated fool, he little knows
Death's noose around his neck he throws,
Who rashly met thee, and a draught
Of life-destroying poison quaffed.
Strong, fierce as death, 'twas thine to choose
Thy way at will, each shape to use;
In power and might like one of us:
What hand has maimed and marred thee thus?
What God or fiend this deed has wrought,
What bard or sage of lofty thought
Was armed with power supremely great
Thy form to mar and mutilate?
In all the worlds not one I see
Would dare a deed to anger me:
Not Indra's self, the Thousand-eyed,

Beneath whose hand fierce Páka[1] died.
My life-destroying darts this day
His guilty breath shall rend away,
E'en as the thirsty wild swan drains
Each milk-drop that the wave retains.
Whose blood in foaming streams shall burst
O'er the dry ground which lies athirst,
When by my shafts transfixed and slain
He falls upon the battle plain?
From whose dead corpse shall birds of air
The mangled flesh and sinews tear,
And in their gory feast delight,
When I have slain him in the fight?
Not God or bard or wandering ghost,
No giant of our mighty host
Shall step between us, or avail
To save the wretch when I assail.
Collect each scattered sense, recall
Thy troubled thoughts, and tell me all.
What wretch attacked thee in the way,
And quelled thee in victorious fray?'
His breast with burning fury fired,
Thus Khara of the fiend inquired:
And then with many a tear and sigh
Thus Śúrpaṇakhá made reply:
''Tis Daśaratha's sons, a pair
Strong, resolute, and young, and fair:
In coats of bark and blackdeer's hide,
And like the radiant lotus eyed:
On berries roots and fruit they feed,
And lives of saintly virtue lead:
With ordered senses undefiled,
Ráma and Lakshmaṇ are they styled.

[1] A demon slain by Indra.

Fair as the Minstrels' King[1] are they,
And stamped with signs of regal sway.
I know not if the heroes trace
Their line from Gods or Dánav[2] race.
There by these wondering eyes between
The noble youths a dame was seen,
Fair, blooming, young, with dainty waist,
And all her bright apparel graced.
For her with ready heart and mind
The royal pair their strength combined,
And brought me to this last distress,
Like some lost woman, comfortless.
Perfidious wretch! my soul is fain
Her foaming blood and theirs to drain.
O let me head the vengeful fight,
And with this hand my murderers smite.
Come, brother, hasten to fulfil
This longing of my eager will.
On to the battle! Let me drink
Their lifeblood as to earth they sink.'

Then Khara, by his sister pressed,
Inflamed with fury, gave his hest
To twice seven giants of his crew,
Fierce as the God of death to view:

'Two men equipped with arms, who wear
Deerskin and bark and matted hair,
Leading a beauteous dame, have strayed
To the wild gloom of Daṇḍak's shade.
These men, this cursed woman slay,
And hasten back without delay,
That this my sister's lips may be
Red with the lifeblood of the three.

[1] Chitraratha, King of the Gandharvas.
[2] Titanic.

Giants, my wounded sister longs
To take this vengeance for her wrongs.
With speed her dearest wish fulfil,
And with your might these creatures kill.
Soon as your matchless strength shall lay
These brothers dead in battle fray,
She in triumphant joy will laugh,
And their hearts' blood delighted quaff.'

The giants heard the words he said,
And forth with Śúrpaṇakhá sped,
As mighty clouds in autumn fly
Urged by the wind along the sky.

CANTO XX.

THE GIANTS' DEATH.

Fierce Śúrpaṇakhá with her train
To Ráma's dwelling came again,
And to the eager giants showed
Where Sítá and the youths abode.
Within the leafy cot they spied
The hero by his consort's side,
And faithful Lakshmaṇ ready still
To wait upon his brother's will.
Then noble Ráma raised his eye
And saw the giants standing nigh,
And then, as nearer still they pressed,
His glorious brother thus addressed:
'Be thine a while, my brother dear,
To watch o'er Sítá's safety here,
And I will slay these creatures who
The footsteps of my spouse pursue.'
He spoke, and reverent Lakshmaṇ heard
Submissive to his brother's word.
The son of Raghu, virtuous-souled,
Strung his great bow adorned with gold,
And, with the weapon in his hand,
Addressed him to the giant band:
'Ráma and Lakshmaṇ we, who spring
From Daśaratha, mighty king;
We dwell a while with Sítá here
In Daṇḍak forest wild and drear.
On woodland roots and fruit we feed

And lives of strictest rule we lead.
Say why would ye our lives oppress
Who sojourn in the wilderness.
Sent hither by the hermits' prayer
With bow and darts unused to spare,
For vengeance am I come to slay
Your sinful band in battle fray.
Rest as ye are: remain content,
Nor try the battle's dire event.
Unless your offered lives ye spurn,
O rovers of the night, return.'

They listened while the hero spoke,
And fury in each breast awoke.
The Bráhman-slayers raised on high
Their mighty spears and made reply:
They spoke with eyes aglow with ire,
While Ráma's burnt with vengeful fire,
And answered thus, in fury wild,
That peerless chief whose tones were mild:

'Nay thou hast angered, overbold,
Khara our lord, the mighty-souled,
And for thy sin, in battle strife
Shalt yield to us thy forfeit life.
No power hast thou alone to stand
Against the numbers of our band.
'Twere vain to match thy single might
Against us in the front of fight.
When we equipped for fight advance
With brandished pike and mace and lance,
Thou, vanquished in the desperate field,
Thy bow, thy strength, thy life shalt yield.'

With bitter words and threatening mien
Thus furious spoke the fierce fourteen,
And raising scymetar and spear

On Ráma rushed in wild career.
Their levelled spears the giant crew
Against the matchless hero threw.
His bow the son of Raghu bent,
And twice seven shafts to meet them sent,
And every javelin sundered fell
By the bright darts he aimed so well.
The hero saw: his anger grew
To fury: from his side he drew
Fresh sunbright arrows pointed keen,
In number, like his foes, fourteen.
His bow he grasped, the string he drew,
And gazing on the giant crew,
As Indra casts the levin, so
Shot forth his arrows at the foe.
The hurtling arrows, stained with gore,
Through the fiends' breasts a passage tore,
And in the earth lay buried deep
As serpents through an ant-hill creep.
Like trees uptorn by stormy blast
The shattered fiends to earth were cast,
And there with mangled bodies they,
Bathed in their blood and breathless, lay.
With fainting heart and furious eye
The demon saw her champions die.
With drying wounds that scarcely bled
Back to her brother's home she fled
Oppressed with pain, with loud lament
At Khara's feet the monster bent.
There like a plant whence slowly come
The trickling drops of oozy gum,
With her grim features pale with pain
She poured her tears in ceaseless rain
There routed Śúrpaṇakhá lay,

And told her brother all,
The issue of the bloody fray,
Her giant champions' fall.

CANTO XXI.

THE ROUSING OF KHARA.

Low in the dust he saw her lie,
And Khara's wrath grew fierce and high.
Aloud he cried to her who came
Disgracefully with baffled aim:
'I sent with thee at thy request
The bravest of my giants, best
Of all who feed upon the slain:
Why art thou weeping here again?
Still to their master's interest true,
My faithful, noble, loyal crew,
Though slaughtered in the bloody fray,
Would yet their monarch's word obey.
Now I, my sister, fain would know
The cause of this thy fear and woe,
Why like a snake thou writhest there,
Calling for aid in wild despair.
Nay, lie not thus in lowly guise:
Cast off thy weakness and arise!'
With soothing words the giant chief
Assuaged the fury of her grief.
Her weeping eyes she slowly dried
And to her brother thus replied:
'I sought thee in my shame and fear
With severed nose and mangled ear:
My gashes like a river bled,
I sought thee and was comforted.
Those twice seven giants brave and strong,

Thou, sentest to avenge the wrong,
To lay the savage Ráma low,
And Lakshman who misused me so:
But ah, the shafts of Ráma through
The bodies of my champions flew:
Though madly fierce their spears they plied
Beneath his conquering might they died.
I saw them, famed for strength and speed,
I saw my heroes fall and bleed:
Great trembling seized my every limb
At the great deed achieved by him.
In trouble, horror, doubt, and dread,
Again to thee for help I fled:
While terror haunts my troubled sight,
I seek thee, rover of the night.
And canst thou not thy sister free
From this wide waste of troublous sea
Whose sharks are doubt and terror, where
Each wreathing wave is dark despair?
Low lie on earth thy giant train
By ruthless Ráma's arrows slain,
And all the mighty demons, fed
On blood, who followed me are dead.
Now if within thy breast may be
Pity for them and love for me,
If thou, O rover of the night,
Have valour and with him can fight,
Subdue the giants' cruel foe
Who dwells where Dandak's thickets grow,
But if thine arm in vain assay
This queller of his foes to slay,
Now surely here before thine eyes,
Wronged and ashamed thy sister dies.
Too well, alas, too well I see

That, strong in war as thou mayst be,
Thou canst not in the battle stand
When Ráma meets thee hand to hand.
Go forth, thou hero but in name,
Assuming might thou canst not claim;
Call friend and kin, no longer stay:
Away from Janasthán, away!
Shame of thy race! the weak alone
Beneath thine arm may sink o'erthrown;
Fly Ráma and his brother: they
Are men too strong for thee to slay.
How canst thou hope, O weak and base,
To make this grove thy dwelling-place?
With Ráma's might unmeet to vie,
O'ermastered thou wilt quickly die.
A hero strong in valorous deed
Is Ráma, Daśaratha's seed;
And scarce of weaker might than he
His brother chief who mangled me.'
Thus wept and wailed in deep distress
The grim misshapen giantess:
Before her brother's feet she lay
O'erwhelmed with grief, and swooned away.

CANTO XXII.

KHARA'S WRATH.

Roused by the taunting words she spoke,
The mighty Khara's wrath awoke,
And there, while giants girt him round,
In these fierce words an utterance found:
'I cannot, peerless one, contain
Mine anger at this high disdain,
Galling as salt when sprinkled o'er
The rawness of a bleeding sore.
Ráma in little count I hold,
Weak man whose days are quickly told.
The caitiff with his life to-day
For all his evil deeds shall pay.
Dry, sister, dry each needless tear,
Stint thy lament and banish fear,
For Ráma and his brother go
This day to Yama's realm below.
My warrior's axe shall stretch him slain,
Ere set of sun, upon the plain,
Then shall thy sated lips be red
With his warm blood in torrents shed.'
As Khara's speech the demon heard,
With sudden joy her heart was stirred:
She fondly praised him as the boast
And glory of the giant host.
First moved to ire by taunts and stings,
Now soothed by gentle flatterings,
To Dúshaṇ, who his armies led,

The demon Khara spoke, and said:
'Friend, from the host of giants call
Full fourteen thousand, best of all,
Slaves of my will, of fearful might,
Who never turn their backs in fight:
Fiends who rejoice to slay and mar,
Dark as the clouds of autumn are:
Make ready quickly, O my friend,
My chariot and the bows I bend,
My swords, my shafts of brilliant sheen,
My divers lances long and keen.
On to the battle will I lead
These heroes of Pulastya's seed,
And thus, O famed for warlike skill,
Ráma my wicked foeman kill.'
He spoke, and ere his speech was done,
His chariot glittering like the sun,
Yoked and announced, by Dúshaṇ's care,
With dappled steeds was ready there.
High as a peak from Meru rent
It burned with golden ornament:
The pole of lazulite, of gold
Were the bright wheels whereon it rolled.
With gold and moonstone blazoned o'er,
Fish, flowers, trees, rocks, the panels bore:
Auspicious birds embossed thereon,
And stars in costly emblem shone.
O'er flashing swords his banner hung,
And sweet bells, ever tinkling, swung.
That mighty host with sword and shield
And car was ready for the field:
And Khara saw, and Dúshaṇ cried,
'Forth to the fight, ye giants, ride'
Then banners waved, and shield and sword

Flashed as the host obeyed its lord.
From Janasthán they sallied out
With eager speed, and din, and shout,
Armed with the mace for close attacks,
The bill, the spear, the battle-axe,
Steel quoit and club that flashed afar,
Huge bow and sword and scymetar,
The dart to pierce, the bolt to strike,
The murderous bludgeon, lance, and pike.
So forth from Janasthán, intent
On Khara's will, the monsters went.
He saw their awful march: not far
Behind the host he drove his car.
Ware of his master's will, to speed
The driver urged each gold-decked steed.
Then forth the warrior's coursers sprang,
And with tumultuous murmur rang
Each distant quarter of the sky
And realms that intermediate lie.
High and more high within his breast
His pride triumphant rose,
While terrible as Death he pressed
Onward to slay his foes.
'More swiftly yet', as on they fled,
He cried in thundering tones
Loud as a cloud that overhead
Hails down a flood of stones.

CANTO XXIII.

THE OMENS.

As forth upon its errand went
That huge ferocious armament,
An awful cloud, in dust and gloom,
With threatening thunders from its womb
Poured in sad augury a flood
Of rushing water mixt with blood.
The monarch's steeds, though strong and fleet,
Stumbled and fell: and yet their feet
Passed o'er the bed of flowers that lay
Fresh gathered on the royal way.
No gleam of sunlight struggled through
The sombre pall of midnight hue,
Edged with a line of bloody red,
Like whirling torches overhead.
A vulture, fierce, of mighty size,
Terrific with his cruel eyes,
Perched on the staff enriched with gold,
Whence hung the flag in many a fold.
Each ravening bird, each beast of prey
Where Janasthán's wild thickets lay,
Rose with a long discordant cry
And gathered as the host went by,
And from the south long, wild, and shrill,
Came spirit voices boding ill.
Like elephants in frantic mood,
Vast clouds terrific, sable-hued,
Hid all the sky where'er they bore

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Their load of water mixt with gore.
Above, below, around were spread
Thick shades of darkness strange and dread,
Nor could the wildered glance descry
A point or quarter of the sky.
Then came o'er heaven a sanguine hue,
Though evening's flush not yet was due,
While each ill-omened bird that flies
Assailed the king with harshest cries.
There screamed the vulture and the crane,
And the loud jackal shrieked again.
Each hideous thing that bodes aright
Disaster in the coming fight,
With gaping mouth that hissed and flamed,
The ruin of the host proclaimed.
Eclipse untimely reft away
The brightness of the Lord of Day,
And near his side was seen to glow
A mace-like comet boding woe.
Then while the sun was lost to view
A mighty wind arose and blew,
And stars like fireflies shed their light,
Nor waited for the distant night.
The lilies drooped, the brooks were dried,
The fish and birds that swam them died,
And every tree that was so fair
With flower and fruit was stripped and bare.
The wild wind ceased, yet, raised on high,
Dark clouds of dust involved the sky.
In doleful twitter long sustained
The restless Sárikás[1] complained,
And from the heavens with flash and flame
Terrific meteors roaring came.

[1] The Śárikú is the Maina, a bird like a starling.

Earth to her deep foundation shook
With rock and tree and plain and brook,
As Khara with triumphant shout,
Borne in his chariot, sallied out.
His left arm throbbed: he knew full well
That omen, and his visage fell.
Each awful sign the giant viewed,
And sudden tears his eye bedewed.
Care on his brow sat chill and black,
Yet mad with wrath he turned not back.
Upon each fearful sight that raised
The shuddering hair the chieftain gazed,
And laughing in his senseless pride
Thus to his giant legions cried:
'By sense of mightiest strength upborne,
These feeble signs I laugh to scorn.
I could bring down the stars that shine
In heaven with these keen shafts of mine.
Impelled by warlike fury I
Could cause e'en Death himself to die.
I will not seek my home again
Until my pointed shafts have slain
This Raghu's son so fierce in pride,
And Lakshman by his brother's side.
And she, my sister, she for whom
These sons of Raghu meet their doom,
She with delighted lips shall drain
The lifeblood of her foemen slain.
Fear not for me: I ne'er have known
Defeat, in battle overthrown.
Fear not for me, O giants; true
Are the proud words I speak to you.
The King of Gods who rules on high,
If wild Airávat bore him nigh,

Should fall before me bolt in hand:
And shall these two my wrath withstand!'
He ended: and the giant host
Who heard their chief's triumphant boast,
Rejoiced with equal pride elate,
Entangled in the noose of Fate.
Then met on high in bright array,
With eyes that longed to see the fray,
God and Gandharva, sage and saint,
With beings pure from earthly taint.
Blest for good works aforetime wrought,
Thus each to other spake his thought:
'Now joy to Bráhmans, joy to kine,
And all whom worlds count half divine!
May Raghu's offspring slay in fight
Pulastya's sons who roam by night!'
In words like these and more, the best
Of high-souled saints their hopes expressed,
Bending their eager eyes from where
Car-borne with Gods they rode in air.
Beneath them stretching far, they viewed
The giants' death-doomed multitude.
They saw where, urged with fury, far
Before the host rolled Khara's car,
And close beside their leader came
Twelve giant peers of might and fame.[1]
Four other chiefs[2] before the rest
Behind their leader Dúshaṇ pressed.
Impetuous, cruel, dark, and dread,
All thirsting for the fray,

[1] Their names which are rather unmanageable and of no importance are Śyenagámí, Prithuśyáma, Yajnaśatru, Vihangama, Durjaya, Paraví-ráksha, Purusha, Kálakámuka, Meghamálí, Mahámálí, Varásya, Rudhi-ráśana.

[2] Mahákapála, Sthúláksha, Pramátha, Triśiras.

The hosts of giant warriors sped
Onward upon their way.
With eager speed they reached the spot
Where dwelt the princely two,—
Like planets in a league to blot
The sun and moon from view.

CANTO XXIV.

THE HOST IN SIGHT.

While Khara, urged by valiant rage,
Drew near that little hermitage,
Those wondrous signs in earth and sky
Smote on each prince's watchful eye.
When Ráma saw those signs of woe
Fraught with destruction to the foe,
With bold impatience scarce repressed
His brother chief he thus addressed:
'These fearful signs, my brother bold,
Which threaten all our foes, behold:
All laden, as they strike the view,
With ruin to the fiendish crew.
The angry clouds are gathering fast,
Their skirts with dusty gloom o'ercast,
And harsh with loud-voiced thunder, rain
Thick drops of blood upon the plain.
See, burning for the coming fight,
My shafts with wreaths of smoke are white,
And my great bow embossed with gold
Throbs eager for the master's hold.
Each bird that through the forest flies
Sends out its melancholy cries.
All signs foretell the dangerous strife,
The jeopardy of limb and life.
Each sight, each sound gives warning clear
That foemen meet and death is near.
But courage, valiant brother! well

The throbbings of mine arm foretell
That ruin waits the hostile powers,
And triumph in the fight is ours.
I hail the welcome omen : thou
Art bright of face and clear of brow.
For, Lakshman, when the eye can trace
A cloud upon the warrior's face
Stealing the cheerful light away,
His life is doomed in battle fray.
List, brother, to that awful cry :
With shout and roar the fiends draw nigh.
With thundering beat of many a drum
The savage-hearted giants come.
The wise who value safety know
To meet, prepared, the coming blow :
In paths of prudence trained aright
They watch the stroke before it smite.
Take thou thine arrows and thy bow,
And with the Maithil lady go
For shelter to the mountain cave
Where thickest trees their branches wave.
I will not have thee, Lakshman, say
One word in answer, but obey.
By all thy honour for these feet
Of mine, dear brother, I entreat.
Thy warlike arm, I know, could smite
To death these rovers of the night ;
But I this day would fight alone
Till all the fiends be overthrown'.

He spake : and Lakshman answered naught :
His arrows and his bow he brought,
And then with Sítá following hied
For shelter to the mountain side.
As Lakshman and the lady through

The forest to the cave withdrew,
'Tis well', cried Ráma. Then he braced
His coat of mail around his waist.
When, bright as blazing fire, upon
His mighty limbs that armour shone,
The hero stood like some great light
Uprising in the dark of night.
His dreadful shafts were by his side;
His trusty bow he bent and plied.
Prepared he stood: the bowstring rang,
Filling the welkin with the clang.

The high-souled Gods together drew
The wonder of the fight to view,
The saints made free from spot and stain,
And bright Gandharvas' heavenly train.
Each glorious sage the assembly sought,
Each saint divine of loftiest thought,
And filled with zeal for Ráma's sake,
Thus they whose deeds were holy spake:

'Now be it well with Bráhmans, now
Well with the worlds and every cow!
Let Ráma in the deadly fray
The fiends who walk in darkness slay,
As He who bear the discus[1] slew
The chieftains of the Asur crew.'

Then each with anxious glances viewed
His fellow and his speech renewed:
'There twice seven thousand giants stand
With impious heart and cruel hand:
Here Ráma stands, by virtue known:
How can the hero fight alone?'

Thus royal sage and Bráhman saint,
Spirit, and Virtue free from taint,

[1] Vishṇu, who bears a *chakra* or discus.

And all the Gods of heaven who rode
On golden cars, their longing showed.
Their hearts with doubt and terror rent,
They saw the giants' armament,
And Ráma clothed in warrior might,
Forth standing in the front of fight.
Lord of the arm no toil might tire,
He stood majestic in his ire,
Matchless in form as Rudra[1] when
His wrath is fierce on Gods or men.

While Gods and saints in close array
Held converse of the coming fray,
The army of the fiends drew near
With sight and sound that counselled fear.
Long loud and deep their war-cry pealed,
As on they rushed with flag and shield,
Each, of his proper valour proud,
Urging to fight the demon crowd.
His ponderous bow each warrior tried,
And swelled his bulk with martial pride.
Mid shout and roar and trampling feet,
And thunder of the drums they beat,
Loud and more loud the tumult went
Throughout the forest's vast extent,
And all the life that moved within
The woodland trembled at the din.
In eager haste all fled to find
Some tranquil spot, nor looked behind.

With every arm of war supplied,
On-rushing wildly like the tide
Of some deep sea, the giant host
Approached where Ráma kept his post.
Then he, in battle skilled and tried,

[1] Śiva.

Bent his keen eye on every side,
And viewed the host of Khara face
To face before his dwelling-place.
He drew his arrows forth, and reared
And strained that bow which foemen feared,
And yielded to the vengeful sway
Of fierce desire that host to slay.
Terrific as the ruinous fire
That ends the worlds, he glowed in ire,
And his tremendous form dismayed
The Gods who roam the forest shade.
For in the furious wrath that glowed
Within his soul the hero showed
Like Śiva when his angry might
Stayed Daksha's sacrificial rite.[1]

Like some great cloud at dawn of day
When first the sun upsprings,
And o'er the gloomy mass each ray
A golden radiance flings:
Thus showed the children of the night,
Whose mail and chariots threw,
With gleam of bows and armlets bright,
Flashes of flamy hue.

[1] See *Additional Notes*—DAKSHA'S SACRIFICE.

CANTO XXV.

THE BATTLE.

When Khara with the hosts he led
Drew near to Ráma's leafy shed,
He saw that queller of the foe
Stand ready with his ordered bow.
He saw, and burning at the view
His clanging bow he raised and drew,
And bade his driver urge apace
His car to meet him face to face.
Obedient to his master's hest
His eager steeds the driver pressed
On to the spot where, none to aid,
The strong-armed chief his weapon swayed.
Soon as the children of the night
Saw Khara rushing to the fight,
His lords with loud unearthly cry
Followed their chief and gathered nigh.
As in his car the leader rode
With all his lords around, he showed
Like the red planet fiery Mars
Surrounded by the lesser stars.
Then with a horrid yell that rent
The air, the giant chieftain sent
A thousand darts in rapid shower
On Ráma matchless in his power.
The rovers of the night, impelled
By fiery rage which naught withheld,
Upon the unconquered prince, who strained

His fearful bow, their arrows rained.
With sword and club, with mace and pike,
With spear and axe to pierce and strike,
Those furious fiends on every side
The unconquerable hero plied.
The giant legions huge and strong,
Like clouds the tempest drives along,
Rushed upon Ráma with the speed
Of whirling car, and mounted steed,
And hill-like elephant, to slay
The matchless prince in battle fray.
Then upon Ráma thick and fast
The rain of mortal steel they cast,
As labouring clouds their torrents shed
Upon the mountain-monarch's[1] head.
As near and nearer round him drew
The warriors of the giant crew,
He showed like Śiva girt by all
His spirits when night's shadows fall.
As the great deep receives each rill
And river rushing from the hill,
He bore that flood of darts, and broke
With well-aimed shaft each murderous stroke.
By stress of arrowy storm assailed,
And wounded sore, he never failed,
Like some high mountain which defies
The red bolts flashing from the skies.
With ruddy streams each limb was dyed
From gaping wounds in breast and side,
Showing the hero like the sun
Mid crimson clouds ere day is done.
Then, at that sight of terror, faint
Grew God, Gandharva, sage, and saint,

[1] Himálaya.

Trembling to see the prince oppose
His single might to myriad foes.
But waxing wroth, with force unspent,
He strained his bow to utmost bent,
And forth his arrows keen and true
In hundreds, yea in thousands flew,—
Shafts none could ward, and none endure:
Death's fatal noose was scarce so sure.
As 'twere in playful ease he shot
His gilded shafts, and rested not.
With swiftest flight and truest aim
Upon the giant hosts they came.
Each smote, each stayed a foeman's breath,
As fatal as the coil of Death.
Each arrow through a giant tore
A passage, and besmeared with gore,
Pursued its onward way and through
The air with flamy brilliance flew.
Unnumbered were the arrows sent
From the great bow which Ráma bent,
And every shaft with iron head
The lifeblood of a giant shed.
Their pennoned bows were cleft, nor mail
Nor shield of hide could aught avail.
For Ráma's myriad arrows tore
Through arms, and bracelets which they wore,
And severed mighty warriors' thighs
Like trunks of elephants in size,
And cut resistless passage sheer
Through gold-decked horse and charioteer,
Slew elephant and rider, slew
The horseman and the charger too,
And infantry unnumbered sent
To dwell neath Yama's government.

Then rose on high a fearful yell
Of rovers of the night, who fell
Beneath that iron torrent, sore
Wounded by shafts that rent and tore.
So mangled by the ceaseless storm
Of shafts of every kind and form,
Such joy they found, as forests feel
When scorched by flame, from Ráma's steel.
The mightiest still the fight maintained,
And furious upon Ráma rained
Dart, arrow, spear, with wild attacks
Of mace, and club, and battle-axe.
But the great chief, unconquered yet,
Their weapons with his arrows met,
Which severed many a giant's head,
And all the plain with corpses spread.
With sundered bow and shattered shield
Headless they sank upon the field,
As the tall trees, that felt the blast
Of Garud's wing, to earth were cast.
The giants left unslaughtered there
Were filled with terror and despair,
And to their leader Khara fled
Faint, wounded, and discomfited.
These fiery Dúshaṇ strove to cheer,
And poised his bow to calm their fear;
Then fierce as He who rules the dead,
When wroth, on angered Ráma sped.
By Dúshaṇ cheered, the demons cast
Their dread aside and rallied fast.
With Sáls, rocks, palm-trees in their hands,
With nooses, maces, pikes, and brands,
Again upon the godlike man
The mighty fiends infuriate ran,

These casting rocks like hail, and these
A whelming shower of leafy trees.
Wild, wondrous fight, the eye to scare,
And raise on end each shuddering hair,
As with the fiends who loved to rove
By night heroic Ráma strove!
The giants in their fury plied
Ráma with darts on every side.
Then, by the gathering demons pressed
From north and south and east and west,
By showers of deadly darts assailed
From every quarter fiercely hailed,
Girt by the foes who swarmed around,
He raised a mighty shout whose sound
Struck terror. On the giant crew
His great Gándharva[1] arrow flew.
A thousand mortal shafts were rained
From the orbed bow the hero strained,
Till east and west and south and north
Were filled with arrows volleyed forth.
They heard the fearful shout: they saw
His mighty hand the bowstring draw,
Yet could no wounded giant's eye
See the swift storm of arrows fly.
Still firm the warrior stood and cast
His deadly missiles thick and fast.
Dark grew the air with arrowy hail
Which hid the sun as with a veil.
Fiends wounded, falling, fallen, slain,
All in a moment, spread the plain,
And thousands scarce alive were left
Mangled, and gashed, and torn, and cleft.
Dire was the sight, the plain o'erspread

[1] One of the mysterious weapons given to Ráma.

With trophies of the mangled dead.
There lay, by Ráma's missiles rent,
Full many a priceless ornament,
With severed limb and broken gem,
Hauberk and helm and diadem.
There lay the shattered car, the steed,
The elephant of noblest breed,
The splintered spear, the shivered mace,
Chouris and screens to shade the face.
The giants saw with bitterest pain
Their warriors weltering on the plain,
Nor dared again his might oppose
Who scourged the cities of his foes.

CANTO XXVI.

DÚSHAṆ'S DEATH.

When Dúshaṇ saw his giant band
Slaughtered by Ráma's conquering hand,
He called five thousand fiends, and gave
His orders. Bravest of the brave,
Invincible, of furious might,
Ne'er had they turned their backs in flight.
They, as their leader bade them seize
Spears, swords, and clubs, and rocks, and trees,
Poured on the dauntless prince again
A ceaseless shower of deadly rain.
The virtuous Ráma, undismayed,
Their missiles with his arrows stayed,
And weakened, ere it fell, the shock
Of that dire hail of tree and rock,
And like a bull with eyelids closed,
The pelting of the storm opposed.
Then blazed his ire: he longed to smite
To earth the rovers of the night.
The wrath that o'er his spirit came
Clothed him with splendour as of flame,
While showers of mortal darts he poured
Fierce on the giants and their lord.
Dúshaṇ, the foeman's dusky dread,
By frenzied rage inspirited,
On Raghu's son his missiles cast
Like Indra's bolts which rend and blast.
But Ráma with a trenchant dart

Cleft Dúshaṇ's ponderous bow apart,
And then the gold-decked steeds who drew
The chariot, with four shafts he slew.
One crescent dart he aimed which shred
Clean from his neck the driver's head;
Three more with deadly skill addressed
Stood quivering in the giant's breast.
Hurled from his car, steeds, driver slain,
The bow he trusted cleft in twain,
He seized his mace, strong, heavy, dread,
High as a mountain's towering head.
With plates of gold adorned and bound,
Embattled Gods it crushed and ground.
Its iron spikes yet bore the stains
Of mangled foemen's blood and brains.
Its heavy mass of jagged steel
Was like a thunderbolt to feel.
It shattered, as on foes it fell,
The city where the senses dwell.[1]
Fierce Dúshaṇ seized that ponderous mace
Like monstrous form of serpent race,
And all his savage soul aglow
With fury, rushed upon the foe.
But Raghu's son took steady aim,
And as the rushing giant came,
Shore with two shafts the arms whereon
The demon's glittering bracelets shone.
His arm at each huge shoulder lopped,
The mighty body reeled and dropped,
And the great mace to earth was thrown
Like Indra's staff when storms have blown.
As some vast elephant who lies
Shorn of his tusks, and bleeding dies,

[1] A periphrasis for the body.

So, when his arms were rent away,
Low on the ground the giant lay.
The spirits saw the monster die,
And loudly rang their joyful cry,
'Honour to Ráma! nobly done!
Well hast thou fought, Kakutstha's son!'
But the great three, the host who led,
Enraged to see their chieftain dead,
As though Death's toils were round them cast,
Rushed upon Ráma fierce and fast.
Mahákapála seized, to strike
His foeman down, a ponderous pike:
Sthúláksha charged with spear to fling,
Pramáthi with his axe to swing.
When Ráma saw, with keen darts he
Received the onset of the three,
As calm as though he hailed a guest
In each, who came for shade and rest.
Mahákapála's monstrous head
Fell with the trenchant dart he sped.
His good right hand in battle skilled
Sthúláksha's eyes with arrows filled,
And trusting still his ready bow
He laid the fierce Pramáthi low,
Who sank as some tall tree falls down
With bough and branch and leafy crown.
Then with five thousand shafts he slew
The rest of Dúshaṇ's giant crew:
Five thousand demons, torn and rent,
To Yama's gloomy realm he sent.
When Khara knew the fate of all
The giant band and Dúshaṇ's fall,
He called the mighty chiefs who led
His army, and in fury said:

'Now Dúshaṇ and his armed train
Lie prostrate on the battle plain.
Lead forth an army mightier still,
Ráma, this wretched man, to kill.
Fight ye with darts of every shape,
Nor let him from your wrath escape.'

Thus spoke the fiend, by rage impelled,
And straight his course toward Ráma held.
With Syenagámi and the rest
Of his twelve chiefs he onward pressed,
And every giant as he went
A storm of well-wrought arrows sent.
Then with his pointed shafts that came
With gold and diamond bright as flame,
Dead to the earth the hero threw
The remnant of the demon crew.
Those shafts with feathers bright as gold,
Like flames which wreaths of smoke enfold,
Smote down the fiends like tall trees rent
By red bolts from the firmament.
A hundred shafts he pointed well:
By their keen barbs a hundred fell:
A thousand,—and a thousand more
In battle's front lay drenched in gore.
Of all defence and guard bereft,
With sundered bows and harness cleft,
Their bodies red with bloody stain
Fell the night-rovèrs on the plain,
Which, covered with the loosened hair
Of bleeding giants prostrate there,
Like some great altar showed, arrayed
For holy rites with grass o'erlaid.
The darksome wood, each glade and dell
Where the wild demons fought and fell,

Was like an awful hell whose floor
Is thick with mire and flesh and gore.
Thus twice seven thousand fiends, a band
With impious heart and bloody hand,
By Raghu's son were overthrown,
A man, on foot, and all alone.
Of all who met on that fierce day,
Khara, great chief, survived the fray,
The monster of the triple head,[1]
And Raghu's son, the foeman's dread.
The other demon warriors, all
Skillful and brave and strong and tall,
In front of battle, side by side,
Struck down by Lakshmaṇ's brother died.
When Khara saw the host he led
Triumphant forth to fight
Stretched on the earth, all smitten dead
By Ráma's nobler might,
Upon his foe he fiercely glared,
And drove against him fast,
Like Indra when his arm is bared
His thundering bolt to cast.

[1] Triśiras.

CANTO XXVII.

THE DEATH OF TRIŚIRAS.

But Triśiras,[1] a chieftain dread,
Marked Khara as he onward sped,
And met his car and cried, to stay
The giant from the purposed fray:
'Mine be the charge: let me attack,
And turn thee from the contest back.
Let me go forth, and thou shalt see
The strong-armed Ráma slain by me.
True are the words I speak, my lord:
I swear it as I touch my sword:
That I this Ráma's blood will spill,
Whom every giant's hand should kill.
This Ráma will I slay, or he
In battle fray shall conquer me.
Restrain thy spirit: check thy car,
And view the combat from afar.
Thou, joying o'er the prostrate foe,
To Janasthán again shalt go,
Or, if I fall in battle's chance,
Against my conqueror advance.'
Thus Triśiras, for death who yearned:
And Khara from the conflict turned.
'Go forth to battle', Khara cried;
And toward his foe the giant hied.
Borne on a car of glittering hue
Which harnessed coursers fleetly drew,

[1] The Three-headed.

Like some huge hill with triple peak
He onward rushed the prince to seek,
Still, like a big cloud, sending out
His arrowy rain with many a shout
Like the deep sullen roars that come
Discordant from a moistened drum.
But Raghu's son, whose watchful eye
Beheld the demon rushing nigh,
From the great bow he raised and bent
A shower of shafts to meet him sent.
Wild grew the fight and wilder yet
As fiend and man in combat met,
As when in some dark wood's retreat
An elephant and a lion meet.

The giant bent his bow, and true
To Ráma's brow three arrows flew.
Then, raging as he felt the stroke,
These words in anger Ráma spoke:
'Heroic chief! is such the power
Of fiends who rove at midnight hour?
Soft as the touch of flowers I feel
The gentle blows thine arrows deal.
Receive in turn my shafts, and know
What arrows fly from Ráma's bow.'
Thus as he spoke his wrath grew hot,
And twice seven deadly shafts he shot
Which, dire as serpent's deadly fang,
Straight to the giant's bosom sprang.
Four arrows more,—each shaped to deal
A mortal wound with barbed steel,—
The glorious hero shot, and slew
The four good steeds the car that drew.
Eight other shafts flew straight and fleet,
And hurled the driver from his seat,

And in the dust the banner laid
That proudly o'er the chariot played.
Then as the fiend prepared to bound
Forth from his useless car to ground,
The hero smote him to the heart,
And numbed his arm with deadly smart.
Again the chieftain, peerless-souled,
Sent forth three rapid darts, and rolled
With each keen arrow, deftly sped,
Low in the dust a monstrous head.
Then yielding to each deadly stroke,
Forth spouting streams of blood and smoke,
The headless trunk bedrenched with gore
Fell to the ground and moved no more.
The fiends who yet were left with life,
Routed and crushed in battle strife,
To Khara's side, like trembling deer
Scared by the hunter, fled in fear.
King Khara saw with furious eye
His scattered giants turn and fly;
Then rallying his broken train
At Raghu's son he drove amain,
Like Ráhu[1] when his deadly might
Comes rushing on the Lord of Night.

[1] The demon who causes eclipses.

CANTO XXVIII.

KHARA DISMOUNTED.

But when he turned his eye where bled
Both Triśiras and Dúshaṇ dead,
Fear o'er the giant's spirit came
Of Ráma's might which naught could tame.
He saw his savage legions, those
Whose force no creature dared oppose,—
He saw the leaders of his train
By Ráma's single prowess slain.
With burning grief he marked the few
Still left him of his giant crew.
As Namuchi[1] on Indra, so
Rushed the dread demon on his foe.
His mighty bow the monster strained,
And angrily on Ráma rained
His mortal arrows in a flood,
Like serpent fangs athirst for blood.
Skilled in the bowman's warlike art,
He plied the string and poised the dart.
Here, on his car and there, he rode,
And passages of battle showed,
While all the skiey regions grew

[1] 'This Asura was a friend of Indra; and taking advantage of his friend's confidence, he drank up Indra's strength along with a draught of wine and Soma. Indra then told the Aśvins and Sarasvatí that Indra had drunk up his strength. The Aśvins in consequence gave Indra a thunderbolt in form of a foam, with which he smote off the head of Namuchi.' GARRETT'S *Classical Dictionary of Indra*. See also Vol. I. p. 132.

Dark with his arrows as they flew.
Then Ráma seized his ponderous bow,
And straight the heaven was all aglow
With shafts whose stroke no life might bear,
That filled with flash and flame the air,
Thick as the blinding torrents sent
Down from Parjanya's[1] firmament.
In space itself no space remained,
But all was filled with arrows rained
Incessantly from each great bow
Wielded by Ráma and his foe.
As thus in furious combat, wrought
To mortal hate, the warriors fought,
The sun himself grew faint and pale,
Obscured behind that arrowy veil.
As when beneath the driver's steel
An elephant is forced to kneel,
So from the barb and pointed head
Of many an arrow Ráma bled.
High on his car the giant rose
Prepared in deadly strife to close,
And all the spirits saw him stand
Like Yama with his noose in hand.
For Khara deemed in senseless pride
That he, beneath whose hand had died
The giant legions, failed at length
Slow sinking with exhausted strength.
But Ráma, like a lion, when
A trembling deer comes nigh his den,
Feared not the demon mad with hate,—
Of lion might and lion gait.
Then in his lofty car that glowed
With sunlike brilliance Khara rode

[1] Indra.

At Ráma: madly on he came
Like a poor moth that seeks the flame.
His archer skill the fiend displayed,
And at the place where Ráma laid
His hand, an arrow cleft in two
The mighty bow the hero drew.
Seven arrows by the giant sent,
Bright as the bolts of Indra, rent
Their way through mail and harness joints,
And pierced him with their iron points.
On Ráma, hero unsurpassed
A thousand shafts smote thick and fast,
While as each missile struck, rang out
The giant's awful battle-shout.
His knotted arrows pierced and tore
The sunbright mail the hero wore,
Till, band and buckle rent away,
Glittering on the ground it lay.
Then pierced in shoulder, breast, and side
Till every limb with blood was dyed,
The chieftain in majestic ire
Shone glorious as the smokeless fire.
Then loud and long the war-cry rose
Of Ráma, terror of his foes,
As, on the giants' death intent,
A ponderous bow he strung and bent,—
Lord Vishṇu's own, of wondrous size,—
Agastya gave the heavenly prize.
Then, rushing on the demon foe,
He raised on high that mighty bow,
And with his well-wrought shafts, whereon
Bright gold between the feathers shone,
He struck the pennon fluttering o'er
The chariot, and it waved no more.

That glorious flag whose every fold
Was rich with blazonry and gold,
Fell as the sun himself by all
The Gods' decree might earthward fall.
From wrathful Khara's hand, whose art
Well knew each vulnerable part,
Four keenly-piercing arrows flew,
And blood in Ráma's bosom drew.
With every limb distained with gore
From deadly shafts which rent and tore,
From Khara's clanging bowstring shot,
The prince's wrath waxed wondrous hot.
His hand upon his bow that best
Of mighty archers firmly pressed,
And from the well-drawn bowstring, true
Each to its mark, six arrows flew.
One quivered in the giant's head,
With two his brawny shoulders bled;
Three, with the crescent heads they bore,
Deep in his breast a passage tore.
Thirteen, to which the stone had lent
The keenest point, were swiftly sent
On the fierce giant, every one
Destructive, gleaming like the sun.
With four the dappled steeds he slew;
One cleft the chariot yoke in two,
One, in the heat of battle sped,
Smote from the neck the driver's head.
The poles were rent apart by three;
Two broke the splintered axle-tree.
Then from the hand of Ráma, while
Across his lips there came a smile,
The twelfth, like thunderbolt impelled,
Cut the great hand and bow it held.

Then, scarce by Indra's self surpassed,
He pierced the giant with the last.
The bow he trusted cleft in twain,
His driver and his horses slain,
Down sprang the giant, mace in hand,
On foot against the foe to stand.
The Gods and saints in bright array
Close gathered in the skies,
The prince's might in battle-fray
Beheld with joyful eyes.
Uprising from their golden seats,
Their hands in honour raised,
They looked on Ráma's noble feats,
And blessed him as they praised.

CANTO XXIX.

KHARA'S DEFEAT.

When Râma saw the giant nigh,
On foot, alone, with mace reared high,
In mild reproof at first he spoke,
Then forth his threatening anger broke:
'Thou with the host 'twas thine to lead,
With elephant and car and steed,
Hast wrought an act of sin and shame,
An act which all who live must blame.
Know that the wretch whose evil mind
Joys in the grief of human kind,
Though the three worlds confess him lord,
Must perish dreaded and abhorred.
Night-rover, when a villain's deeds
Distress the world he little heeds,
Each hand is armed his life to take,
And crush him like a deadly snake.
The end is near when men begin
Through greed or lust a life of sin,
E'en as a Brâhman's dame, unwise,
Eats of the fallen hail [1] and dies.
Thy hand has slain the pure and good,
The hermit saints of Daṇḍak wood,
Of holy life, the heirs of bliss;
And thou shalt reap the fruit of this.
Not long shall they whose cruel breasts
Joy in the sin the world detests

[1] Popularly supposed to cause death.

Retain their guilty power and pride,
But fade like trees whose roots are dried.
Yes, as the seasons come and go,
Each tree its kindly fruit must show,
And sinners reap in fitting time
The harvest of each earlier crime.
As those must surely die who eat
Unwittingly of poisoned meat,
They too whose lives in sin are spent
Receive ere long the punishment.
And know, thou rover of the night,
That I, a king, am sent to smite
The wicked down, who court the hate
Of men whose laws they violate.
This day my vengeful hand shall send
Shafts bright with gold to tear and rend,
And pass with fury through thy breast
As serpents pierce an emmets' nest.
Thou with thy host this day shalt be
Among the dead below, and see
The saints beneath thy hand who bled,
Whose flesh thy cruel maw has fed.
They, glorious on their seats of gold,
Their slayer shall in hell behold.
Fight with all strength thou callest thine,
Mean scion of ignoble line,
Still, like the palm-tree's fruit, this day
My shafts thy head in dust shall lay.'

Such were the words that Ráma said:
Then Khara's eyes with wrath glowed red,
Who, maddened by the rage that burned
Within him, with a smile returned:

'Thou Daśaratha's son, hast slain
The meaner giants of my train:

And canst thou idly vaunt thy might
And claim the praise not thine by right?
Not thus in self-laudation rave
The truly great, the nobly brave:
No empty boasts like thine disgrace
The foremost of the human race.
The mean of soul, unknown to fame,
Who taint their warrior race with shame,
Thus speak in senseless pride as thou,
O Raghu's son, hast boasted now.
What hero, when the war-cry rings,
Vaunts the high race from which he springs,
Or seeks, when warriors meet and die,
His own descent to glorify?
Weakness and folly show confessed
In every vaunt thou utterest,
As when the flames fed high with grass
Detect the simulating brass.
Dost thou not see me standing here
Armed with the mighty mace I rear,
Firm as an earth-upholding hill
Whose summit veins of metal fill?
Lo, here I stand before thy face
To slay thee with my murderous mace,
As Death, the universal lord,
Stands threatening with his fatal cord.
Enough of this. Much more remains
That should be said: but time constrains.
Ere to his rest the sun descend,
And shades of night the combat end,
The twice seven thousand of my band
Who fell beneath thy bloody hand
Shall have their tears all wiped away
And triumph in thy fall to-day.'

He spoke, and loosing from his hold
His mighty mace ringed round with gold,
Like some red bolt alive with fire,
Hurled it at Ráma, mad with ire.
The ponderous mace which Khara threw
Sent fiery flashes as it flew.
Trees, shrubs were scorched beneath the blast,
As onward to its aim it passed.
But Ráma, watching as it sped
Dire as His noose who rules the dead,
Cleft it with arrows as it came
On rushing with a hiss and flame.
Its fury spent and burnt away,
Harmless upon the ground it lay
Like a great snake in furious mood
By herbs of numbing power subdued.

CANTO XXX.

KHARA'S DEATH.

When Rāma, pride of Raghu's race,
Virtue's dear son, had cleft the mace,
Thus with superior smile the best
Of chiefs the furious fiend addressed:
'Thou, worst of giant blood, at length
Hast shown the utmost of thy strength,
And forced by greater might to bow,
Thy vaunting threats are idle now.
My shafts have cut thy club in twain:
Useless it lies upon the plain,
And all thy pride and haughty trust
Lie with it levelled in the dust.
The words that thou hast said to-day,
That thou wouldst wipe the tears away
Of all the giants I have slain,
My deeds shall render void and vain.
Thou meanest of the giants' breed,
Evil in thought and word and deed,
My hand shall take that life of thine
As Garuḍ[1] seized the juice divine.
Thou, rent by shafts, this day shalt die:
Low on the ground thy corse shall lie,
And bubbles from thy cloven neck
With froth and blood thy skin shall deck.
With dust and mire all ruddy dyed,

[1] Garuḍ, the King of birds, carried off the Amrit or drink of Paradise from Indra's custody.

Thy torn arms lying by thy side,
While streams of blood each limb shall steep,
Thou on earth's breast shalt take thy sleep
Like a fond lover when he strains
The beauty whom at length he gains.
Now when thy heavy eyelids close
For ever in thy deep repose,
Again shall Daṇḍak forest be
Safe refuge for the devotee.
Thou slain, and all thy race who held
The realm of Janasthán expelled,
Again shall happy hermits rove,
Fearing no danger, through the grove.
Within those bounds, their brethren slain,
No giant shall this day remain,
But all shall fly with many a tear,
And fearing, rid the saints of fear.
This bitter day shall misery bring
On all the race that calls thee king.
Fierce as their lord, thy dames shall know,
Bereft of joys, the taste of woe.
Base, cruel wretch, of evil mind,
Plaguer of Brâhmans and mankind,
With trembling hands each devotee
Feeds holy fires in dread of thee.'
Thus with wild fury unrepressed
Raghu's brave son the fiend addressed;
And Khara, as his wrath grew high,
Thus thundered forth his fierce reply:
'By senseless pride to madness wrought,
By danger girt thou fearest naught,
Nor heedest, numbered with the dead,
What thou shouldst say and leave unsaid.
When Fate's tremendous coils enfold

The captive in resistless hold,
He knows not right from wrong, each sense
Numbed by that deadly influence.'

He spoke, and when his speech was done
Bent his fierce brows on Raghu's son.
With eager eyes he looked around
If lethal arms might yet be found.
Not far away and full in view
A Sál-tree towering upward grew.
His lips in mighty strain compressed,
He tore it up with root and crest,
With huge arms waved it o'er his head
And hurled it shouting, Thou art dead.
But Ráma, unsurpassed in might,
Stayed with his shafts its onward flight,
And furious longing seized his soul
The giant in the dust to roll.
Great drops of sweat each limb bedewed,
His red eyes showed his wrathful mood.
A thousand arrows, swiftly sent,
The giant's bosom tore and rent.
From every gash his body showed
The blood in foamy torents flowed,
As springing from their caverns leap
Swift rivers down the mountain steep.
When Khara felt each deadened power
Yielding beneath that murderous shower,
He charged, infuriate with the scent
Of blood, in dire bewilderment.
But Ráma watched, with ready bow,
The onset of his bleeding foe,
And ere the monster reached him, drew
Backward in haste a yard or two.
Then from his side a shaft he took

Whose mortal stroke no life might brook:
Of peerless might, it bore the name
Of Brahmá's staff, and glowed with flame:
Lord Indra, ruler of the skies,
Himself had given the glorious prize.
His bow the virtuous hero drew,
And at the fiend the arrow flew.
Hissing and roaring like the blast
Of tempest through the air it passed,
And fixed, by Ráma's vigour sped,
In the foe's breast its pointed head.
Then fell the fiend: the quenchless flame
Burnt furious in his wounded frame.
So burnt by Rudra Andhak[1] fell
In Śvetáraṇya's silvery dell:
So Namuchi and Vritra[2] died
By steaming bolts that tamed their pride:
So Bala[3] fell by lightning sent
By Him who rules the firmament.
Then all the Gods in close array
With the bright hosts who sing and play,
Filled full of rapture and amaze,
Sang hymns of joy in Ráma's praise,
Beat their celestial drums and shed
Rain of sweet flowers upon his head.
For three short hours had scarcely flown,
And by his pointed shafts o'erthown
The twice seven thousand fiends, whose will
Could change their shapes, in death were still,

[1] A demon, son of Kaśyap and Diti, slain by Rudra or Śiva when he attempted to carry off the tree of Paradise.

[2] Namuchi and Vritra were two demons slain by Indra. Vritra personifies drought, the enemy of Indra, who imprisons the rain in the cloud.

[3] Another demon slain by Indra.

With Triśiras and Dúshaṇ slain,
And Khara, leader of the train.
'O wondrous, deed,' the bards began,
'The noblest deed of virtuous man!
Heroic strength that stood alone,
And firmness e'en as Vishṇu's own!'
Thus having sung, the shining train
Turned to their heavenly homes again.
Then the high saints of royal race
And loftiest station sought the place,
And by the great Agastya led,
With reverence to Ráma said:
'For this, Lord Indra, glorious sire,
Majestic as the burning fire,
Who crushes cities in his rage,
Sought Śarabhanga's hermitage.
Thou wast, this great design to aid,
Led by the saints to seek this shade,
And with thy mighty arm to kill
The giants who delight in ill.
Thou, Daśaratha's noble son,
The battle for our sake hast won,
And saints in Daṇḍak's wild who live
Their days to holy tasks can give.'
Forth from the mountain cavern came
The hero Lakshmaṇ with the dame,
And rapture beaming from his face,
Resought the hermit dwelling-place.
Then when the mighty saints had paid
Due honour for the victor's aid,
The glorious Ráma honoured too
By Lakshmaṇ to his cot withdrew.
When Sítá looked upon her lord,
His foemen slain, the saints restored,

In pride and rapture uncontrolled
She clasped him in her loving hold.
On the dead fiends her glances fell:
She saw her lord alive and well,
Victorious after toil and pain,
And Janak's child was blest again.
Once more, once more with new delight
Her tender arms she threw
Round Ráma whose victorious might
Had crushed the demon crew.
Then as his grateful reverence paid
Each saint of lofty soul,
O'er her sweet face, all fears allayed,
The flush of transport stole.

CANTO XXXI.

RÁVAṆ.

But of the host of giants one,
Akampan, from the field had run
And sped to Lanká[1] to relate
In Rávaṇ's ear the demons' fate:
'King, many a giant from the shade
Of Janasthán in death is laid:
Khara the chief is slain, and I
Could scarcely from the battle fly.'
Fierce anger, as the monarch heard,
Inflamed his look, his bosom stirred,
And while with scorching glance he eyed
The messenger, he thus replied:
'What fool has dared, already dead,
Strike Janasthán, the general dread?
Who is the wretch shall vainly try
In earth, heaven, hell, from me to fly?
Vaiśravaṇ,[2] Indra, Vishṇu, He
Who rules the dead, must reverence me;
For not the mightiest lord of these
Can brave my will and live at ease.
Fate finds in me a mighter fate
To burn the fires that devastate.
With unresisted influence I
Can force e'en Death himself to die,
With all-surpassing might restrain

[1] The capital of the giant king Rávaṇ.

[2] Kuvera, the God of old.

The fury of the hurricane,
And burn in my tremendous ire
The glory of the sun and fire.'
As thus the fiend's hot fury blazed,
His trembling hands Akampan raised,
And with a voice which fear made weak,
Permission craved his tale to speak.
King Rávaṇ gave the leave he sought,
And bade him tell the news he brought.
His courage rose, his voice grew bold,
And thus his mournful tale he told:
'A prince with mighty shoulders, sprung
From Daśaratha, brave and young,
With arms well moulded, bears the name
Of Ráma with a lion's frame.
Renowned, successful, dark of limb,
Earth has no warrior equals him.
He fought in Janasthán and slew
Dúshaṇ the fierce and Khara too.'
Rávaṇ, the giants' royal chief,
Received Akampan's tale of grief.
Then, panting like an angry snake,
These words in turn the monarch spake:
'Say quick, did Ráma seek the shade
Of Janasthán with Indra's aid,
And all the dwellers in the skies
To back his hardy enterprise?'
Akampan heard, and straight obeyed
His master, and his answer made.
Then thus the power and might he told
Of Raghu's son the lofty-souled:
'Best is that chief of all who know
With deftest art to draw the bow.
His are strange arms of heavenly might,

And none can match him in the fight.
His brother Lakshman brave as he,
Fair as the rounded moon to see,
With eyes like night and voice that comes
Deep as the roll of beaten drums,
By Ráma's side stands ever near,
Like wind that aids the flame's career.
That glorious chief, that prince of kings,
On Janasthán this ruin brings.
No Gods were there,—dismiss the thought;
No heavenly legions came and fought.
His swift-winged arrows Ráma sent,
Each bright with gold and ornament.
To serpents many-faced they turned:
The giant hosts they ate and burned.
Whene'er these fled in wild dismay
Ráma was there to strike and slay.
By him, O King of high estate,
Is Janasthán left desolate.'

Akampan ceased: in angry pride
The giant monarch thus replied:
'To Janasthán myself will go
And lay these daring brothers low.'

Thus spoke the king in furious mood:
Akampan then his speech renewed:
'O listen while I tell at length
The terror of the hero's strength.
No power can check, no might can tame
Ráma, a chief of noblest fame.
He with resistless shafts can stay
The torrent foaming on its way.
Sky, stars, and constellations, all
To his fierce might would yield and fall.
His power could earth itself uphold

Down sinking as it sank of old.[1]
Or all its plains and cities drown,
Breaking the wild sea's barrier down ;
Crush the great deep's impetuous will,
Or bid the furious wind be still.
He glorious in his high estate
The triple world could devastate,
And there, supreme of men, could place
His creatures of a new-born race.
Never can mighty Ráma be
O'ercome in fight, my King, by thee.
Thy giant host the day might win
From him, if heaven were gained by sin.
If Gods were joined with demons, they
Could ne'er, I ween, that hero slay.
But guile may kill the wondrous man :
Attend while I disclose the plan.
His wife, above all women graced,
Is Sítá of the dainty waist,
With limbs to fair proportion true,
And a soft skin of lustrous hue.
Round neck and arm rich gems are twined :
She is the gem of womankind.
With her no bright Gandharví vies,
No nymph or Goddess in the skies ;
And none to rival her would dare
Mid dames who part the long black hair.
That hero in the wood beguile,
And steal his lovely spouse the while.
Reft of his darling wife, be sure,
Brief days the mourner will endure'.
With flattering hope of triumph moved
The giant king that plan approved,

[1] In the great deluge.

Pondered the counsel in his breast,
And then Akampan thus addressed:
'Forth in my car I go at morn,
None but the driver with me borne,
And this fair Sítá will I bring
Back to my city triumphing.'
Forth in his car by asses drawn
The giant monarch sped at dawn.
Bright as the sun, the chariot cast
Light through the sky as on it passed.
Then high in air that best of cars
Traversed the path of lunar stars,
Sending a fitful radiance pale
As moonbeams shot through cloudy veil.
Far on his airy way he flew:
Near Táḍakeya's[1] grove he drew.
Márícha welcomed him, and placed
Before him food which giants taste,
With honour led him to a seat,
And brought him water for his feet;
And then with timely words addressed
Such question to his royal guest:
'Speak, is it well with thee whose sway
The giant multitudes obey?
I know not all, and ask in fear
The cause, O King, why thou art here.'
Rávaṇ, the giants' mighty king,
Heard wise Márícha's questioning,
And told with ready answer, taught
In eloquence, the cause he sought:
'My guards, the bravest of my band,
Are slain by Ráma's vigorous hand,

[1] The giant Márícha, son of Táḍaká. Táḍaká was slain by Ráma, See Vol. I. p. 138.

And Janasthán, that feared no hate
Of foes, is rendered desolate.
Come aid me in the plan I lay
To steal the conqueror's wife away.'
Márícha heard the king's request,
And thus the giant chief addressed:
'What foe in friendly guise is he
Who spoke of Sítá's name to thee?
Who is the wretch whose thought would bring
Destruction on the giants' king?
Whose is the evil counsel, say,
That bids thee bear his wife away,
And careless of thy life provoke
Earth's loftiest with threatening stroke?
A foe is he who dared suggest
This hopeless folly to thy breast,
Whose ill advice would bid thee draw
The venomed fang from serpent's jaw.
By whose unwise suggestion led
Wilt thou the path of ruin tread?
Whence falls the blow that would destroy
Thy gentle sleep of ease and joy?
Like some wild elephant is he
That rears his trunk on high,
Lord of an ancient pedigree,
Huge tusks, and furious eye.
Rávaṇ, no rover of the night
With bravest heart can brook,
Met in the front of deadly fight,
On Raghu's son to look.
The giant hosts were brave and strong,
Good at the bow and spear:
But Ráma slew the routed throng,
A lion mid the deer.

No lion's tooth can match his sword,
Or arrows fiercely shot:
He sleeps, he sleeps—the lion lord;
Be wise and rouse him not.
O Monarch of the giants, well
Upon my counsel think,
Lest thou for ever in the hell
Of Ráma's vengeance sink:
A hell, where deadly shafts are sent
From his tremendous bow,
While his great arms all flight prevent,
Like deepest mire below:
Where the wild floods of battle rave
Above the foeman's head,
And each with many a feathery wave
Of shafts is garlanded.
O, quench the flames that in thy breast
With raging fury burn:
And pacified and self-possessed
To Lanká's town return.
Rest thou in her imperial bowers
With thine own wives content,
And in the wood let Ráma's hours
With Sítá still be spent.'
The lord of Lanká's isle obeyed
The counsel, and his purpose stayed.
Borne on his car he parted thence
And gained his royal residence.

CANTO XXXII.

RÁVAṆ ROUSED.

But Súrpaṇakhá saw the plain
Spread with the fourteen thousand slain,
Doers of cruel deeds, o'erthrown
By Ráma's mighty arm alone,
And Triśiras and Dúshaṇ dead,
And Khara, with the hosts they led.
Their death she saw, and mad with pain,
Roared like a cloud that brings the rain,
And fled in anger and dismay
To Lanká, seat of Rávaṇ's sway.
There on a throne of royal state
Exalted sat the potentate,
Begirt with counsellor and peer,
Like Indra with the Storm-Gods near.
Bright as the sun's full splendour shone
The glorious throne he sat upon,
As when the blazing fire is red
Upon a golden altar fed.
Wide gaped his mouth at every breath,
Tremendous as the jaws of Death.
With him high saints of lofty thought,
Gandharvas, Gods, had vainly fought.
The wounds were on his body yet
From wars where Gods and demons met,
And scars still marked his ample chest
By fierce Airávat's[1] tusk impressed.

[1] Indra's elephant.

A score of arms, ten necks, had he,
His royal gear was brave to see.
His massive form displayed each sign
That marks the heir of kingly line.
In stature like a mountain height,
His arms were strong, his teeth were white,
And all his frame of massive mould
Seemed lazulite adorned with gold.
A hundred seams impressed each limb
Where Vishṇu's arm had wounded him,
And chest and shoulder bore the print
Of sword and spear and arrow dint,
Where every God had struck a blow
In battle with the giant foe.
His might to wildest rage could wake
The sea whose faith naught else can shake,
Hurl towering mountains to the earth,
And crush e'en foes of heavenly birth.
The bonds of law and right he spurned:
To others' wives his fancy turned.
Celestial arms he used in fight,
And loved to mar each holy rite.
He went to Bhogavatí's town,[1]
Where Vásuki was beaten down,
And stole, victorious in the strife,
Lord Takshaka's beloved wife.
Kailása's lofty crest he sought,
And when in vain Kuvera fought,
Stole Pushpak thence, the car that through
The air, as willed the master, flew.
Impelled by furious anger, he
Spoiled Nandan's[2] shade and Nalinî,

[1] Bhogavatí, in Pátála in the regions under the earth, is the capital of the serpent race whose king is Vásuki.

[2] The grove of Indra.

And Chaitraratha's heavenly grove,
The haunts where Gods delight to rove.
Tall as a hill that cleaves the sky,
He raised his mighty arms on high
To check the blessed moon, and stay
The rising of the Lord of Day.
Ten thousand years the giant spent
On dire austerities intent,
And of his heads an offering, laid
Before the Self-existent, made.
No God or fiend his life could take,
Gandharva, goblin, bird, or snake:
Safe from all fears of death, except
From human arm, that life was kept.
Oft when the priests began to raise
Their consecrating hymns of praise,
He spoiled the Soma's sacred juice
Poured forth by them in solemn use.
The sacrifice his hands o'erthrew,
And cruelly the Bráhmans slew.
His was a heart that naught could melt,
Joying in woes which others felt.
She saw the ruthless monster there,
Dread of the worlds, unused to spare.
In robes of heavenly texture dressed,
Celestial wreaths adorned his breast.
He sat a shape of terror, like
Destruction ere the worlds it strike.
She saw him in his pride of place,
The joy of old Pulastya's[1] race,
Begirt by counsellor and peer,
Rávaṇ, the foeman's mortal fear,

[1] Pulastya is considered as the ancestor of the Rakshases or giants as he is the father of Viśravas the father of Ravaṇ and his brethren.

And terror in her features shown,
The giantess approached the throne.
Then Súrpaṇakhá bearing yet
Each deeply printed trace
Where the great-hearted chief had set
A mark upon her face,
Impelled by terror and desire,
Still fierce, no longer bold,
To Rávaṇ of the eyes of fire
Her tale, infuriate, told.

CANTO XXXIII.

SÚRPAṆAKHÁ'S SPEECH.

Burning with anger, in the ring
Of counsellors who girt their king,
To Rávaṇ, ravener of man,
With bitter words she thus began:
'Wilt thou absorbed in pleasure, still
Pursue unchecked thy selfish will;
Nor turn thy heedless eyes to see
The coming fate which threatens thee?
The king who days and hours employs
In base pursuit of vulgar joys
Must in his people's sight be vile
As fire that smokes on funeral pile.
He who when duty calls him spares
No time for thought of royal cares,
Must with his realm and people all
Involved in fatal ruin fall.
As elephants in terror shrink
From the false river's miry brink,
Thus subjects from a monarch flee
Whose face their eyes may seldom see,
Who spends the hours for toil ordained
In evil courses unrestrained.
He who neglects to guard and hold
His kingdom by himself controlled,
Sinks nameless like a hill whose head
Is buried in the ocean's bed.
Thy foes are calm and strong and wise,

Fiends, Gods, and warriors of the skies,—
How, heedless, wicked, weak, and vain,
Wilt thou thy kingly state maintain?
Thou, lord of giants, void of sense,
Slave of each changing influence,
Heedless of all that makes a king,
Destruction on thy head wilt bring.
O conquering chief, the prince, who boasts
Of treasury and rule and hosts,
By others led, though lord of all,
Is meaner than the lowest thrall.
For this are monarchs said to be
Long-sighted, having power to see
Things far away by faithful eyes
Of messengers and loyal spies.
But aid from such thou wilt not seek:
Thy counsellors are blind and weak,
Or thou from these hadst surely known
Thy legions and thy realm o'erthrown.
Know, twice seven thousand, fierce in might,
Are slain by Ráma in the fight,
And they, the giant host who led,
Khara and Dúshaṇ, both are dead.
Know, Ráma with his conquering arm
Has freed the saints from dread of harm,
Has smitten Janasthán and made
Asylum safe in Daṇḍak's shade.
Enslaved and dull, of blinded sight,
Intoxicate with vain delight,
Thou closest still thy heedless eyes
To dangers in thy realm that rise.
A king besotted, mean, unkind,
Of niggard hand and slavish mind
Will find no faithful followers heed

Their master in his hour of need.
The friend on whom he most relies,
In danger, from a monarch flies,
Imperious in his high estate,
Conceited, proud, and passionate;
Who ne'er to state affairs attends
With wholesome fear when woe impends,
Most weak and worthless as the grass,
Soon from his sway the realm will pass.
For rotting wood a use is found,
For clods and dust that strew the ground,
But when a king has lost his sway,
Useless he falls, and sinks for aye.
As raiment by another worn,
As faded garland crushed and torn,
So is, unthroned, the proudest king,
Though mighty once, a uselcss thing.
But he who every sense subdues
And each event observant views,
Rewards the good and keeps from wrong,
Shall reign secure and flourish long.
Though lulled in sleep his senses lie
He watches with a ruler's eye,
Untouched by favour, ire, and hate,
And him the people celebrate.
O weak of mind, without a trace
Of virtues that a king should grace,
Who hast not learnt from watchful spy
That low in death the giants lie.
Scorner of others, but enchained
By every base desire,
By thee each duty is disdained
Which time and place require.
Soon wilt thou, if thou canst not learn,

Ere yet it be too late,
The good from evil to discern,
Fall from thy high estate.'
As thus she ceased not to upbraid
The king with cutting speech,
And every fault to view displayed,
Naming and marking each,
The monarch of the sons of night,
Of wealth and power possessed,
And proud of his imperial might,
Long pondered in his breast.

CANTO XXXIV.

SÚRPAṆAKHÁ'S SPEECH.

Then forth the giant's fury broke
As Súrpaṇakhá harshly spoke.
Girt by his lords the demon king
Looked on her, fiercely questioning:
'Who is this Ráma, whence, and where?
His form, his might, his deeds declare.
His wandering steps what purpose led
To Daṇḍak forest, hard to tread?
What arms are his that he could smite
In fray the rovers of the night,
And Triśiras and Dúshaṇ lay
Low on the earth, and Khara slay?
Tell all, my sister, and declare
Who mained thee thus, of form most fair.'
Thus by the giant king addressed,
While burnt her fury unrepressed,
The giantess declared at length
The hero's form and deeds and strength:
'Long are his arms and large his eyes:
A black deer's skin his dress supplies.
King Daśaratha's son is he,
Fair as Kandarpa's self to see.
Adorned with many a golden band,
A bow, like Indra's, arms his hand,
And shoots a flood of arrows fierce
As venomed snakes to burn and pierce.
I looked, I looked, but never saw

His mighty hand the bowstring draw
That sent the deadly arrows out,
While rang through air his battle-shout.
I looked, I looked, and saw too well
How with that hail the giants fell,
As falls to earth the golden grain,
Struck by the blows of Indra's rain.
He fought, and twice seven thousand, all
Terrific giants, strong and tall,
Fell by the pointed shafts o'erthrown
Which Ráma shot on foot, alone.
Three little hours had scarcely fled,—
Khara and Dúshaṇ both were dead;
And he had freed the saints and made
Asylum sure in Daṇḍak's shade.
Me of his grace the victor spared,
Or I the giants' fate had shared.
The high-souled Ráma would not deign
His hand with woman's blood to stain.
The glorious Lakshmaṇ, justly dear,
In gifts and warrior might his peer,
Serves his great brother with the whole
Devotion of his faithful soul:
Impetuous victor, bold and wise,
First in each hardy enterprise,
Still ready by his side to stand,
A second self or better hand.
And Ráma has a large-eyed spouse,—
Pure as the moon her cheek and brows,
Dearer than life in Ráma's sight,
Whose happiness is her delight.
With beauteous hair and nose the dame
From head to foot has naught to blame.
She shines the wood's bright Goddess, Queen

Of beauty with her noble mien.
First in the ranks of women placed
Is Sítá of the dainty waist.
In all the earth mine eyes have ne'er
Seen female form so sweetly fair.
Goddess nor nymph can vie with her,
Nor bride of heavenly chorister.
He who might call this dame his own,
Her eager arms about him thrown,
Would live more blest in Sítá's love
Than Indra in the world above.
She, peerless in her form and face
And rich in every gentle grace,
Is worthy bride, O King, for thee,
As thou art meet her lord to be.
I even I, will bring the bride
In triumph to her lover's side—
This beauty fairer than the rest,
With rounded limb and heaving breast.
Each wound upon my face I owe
To cruel Lakshman's savage blow.
But thou, O brother, shalt survey
Her moonlike loveliness to-day,
And Káma's piercing shafts shall smite
Thine amorous bosom at the sight.
If in thy breast the longing rise
To make thine own the beauteous prize,
Up, let thy better foot begin
The journey and the treasure win.
If, giant Lord, thy favouring eyes
Regard the plan which I advise,
Up, cast all fear and doubt away
And execute the words I say.
Come, giant King, this treasure seek,

For thou art strong and they are weak.
Let Sítá of the faultless frame
Be borne away and be thy dame.
Thy host in Janasthán who dwelt
Forth to the battle hied,
And by the shafts which Ráma dealt
They perished in their pride.
Dúshaṇ and Khara breathe no more,
Laid low upon the plain.
Arise, and ere the day be o'er
Take vengeance for the slain.'

CANTO XXXV.

RÁVAṆ'S JOURNEY.

When Rávaṇ, by her fury spurred,
That terrible advice had heard,
He bade his nobles quit his side,
And to the work his thought applied.
He turned his anxious mind to scan
On every side the hardy plan:
The gain against the risk he laid,
Each hope and fear with care surveyed,
And in his heart at length decreed
To try performance of the deed.
Then steady in his dire intent
The giant to the courtyard went.
There to his charioteer he cried,
'Bring forth the car whereon I ride.'
Aye ready at his master's word
The charioteer the order heard,
And yoked with active zeal the best
Of chariots at his lord's behest.
Asses with heads of goblins drew
That wondrous car where'er it flew.
Obedient to the will it rolled
Adorned with gems and glistering gold.
Then mounting, with a roar as loud
As thunder from a lábouring cloud,
The mighty monarch to the tide
Of Ocean, lord of rivers, hied.
White was the shade above him spread,

White chouris waved around his head,
And he with gold and jewels bright
Shone like the glossy lazulite.
Ten necks and twenty arms had he:
His royal gear was good to see.
The heavenly Gods' insatiate foe,
Who made the blood of hermits flow,
He like the Lord of Hills appeared
With ten huge heads to heaven upreared.
In the great car whereon he rode,
Like some dark cloud the giant showed,
When round it in their close array
The cranes mid wreaths of lightning play.
He looked, and saw, from realms of air,
The rocky shore of ocean, where
Unnumbered trees delightful grew
With flower and fruit of every hue.
He looked on many a lilied pool
With silvery waters fresh and cool,
And shores like spacious altars meet
For holy hermits' lone retreat.
The graceful palm adorned the scene,
The plantain waved her glossy green.
There grew the sál and betel, there
On bending boughs the flowers were fair.
There hermits dwelt who tamed each sense
By strictest rule of abstinence:
Gandharvas, Kinnars,[1] thronged the place,
Nágas and birds of heavenly race.
Bright minstrels of the ethereal quire,
And saints exempt from low desire,
With Ajas, sons of Brahmá's line,
Maríchipas of seed divine,

[1] Beings with the body of a man and the head of a horse.

Vaikhánasas and Máshas strayed,
And Bálakhilyas[1] in the shade.
The lovely nymphs of heaven were there,
Celestial wreaths confined their hair,
And to each form new grace was lent
By wealth of heavenly ornament.
Well skilled was each in play and dance
And gentle arts of dalliance.
The glorious wife of many a God
Those beautiful recesses trod,
There Gods and Dánavs, all who eat
The food of heaven, rejoiced to meet.
The swan and Sáras thronged each bay
With curlews, ducks, and divers gay,
Where the sea spray rose soft and white
O'er rocks of glossy lazulite.
As his swift way the fiend pursued
Pale chariots of the Gods he viewed,
Bearing each lord whose rites austere
Had raised him to the heavenly sphere.
Thereon celestial garlands hung,
There music played and songs were sung.
Then bright Gandharvas met his view,
And heavenly nymphs, as on he flew.
He saw the sandal woods below,
And precious trees of odorous flow,
That to the air around them lent
Their riches of delightful scent;
Nor failed his roving eye to mark
Tall aloe trees in grove and park.
He looked on woods with cassias filled,
And plants which balmy sweets distilled,

[1] Ájas, Marichipas, Vaikhánasas, Máshas, and Bálakhilyas are classes of supernatural beings who lead the lives of hermits.

Where her fair flowers the betel showed
And the bright pods of pepper glowed.
The pearls in many a silvery heap
Lay on the margin of the deep,
And grey rocks rose amid the red
Of coral washed from ocean's bed.
High soared the mountain peaks that bore
Treasures of gold and silver ore,
And leaping down the rocky walls
Came wild and glorious waterfalls.
Fair towns which grain and treasure held,
And dames who every gem excelled,
He saw outspread beneath him far,
With steed, and elephant, and car.
That ocean shore he viewed that showed
Fair as the blessed Gods' abode,
Where cool delightful breezes played
O'er levels in the freshest shade.
He saw a fig-tree like a cloud
With mighty branches earthward bowed.
It stretched a hundred leagues and made
For hermit bands a welcome shade.
Thither the feathered king of yore
An elephant and tortoise bore,
And lighted on a bough to eat
The captives of his taloned feet.
The bough unable to sustain
The crushing weight and sudden strain,
Loaded with sprays and leaves of spring
Gave way beneath the feathered king.
Under the shadow of the tree
Dwelt many a saint and devotee,
Ájas, the sons of Brahmá's line,
Máshas, Maríchipas divine,

Vaikhánasas, and all the race
Of Bálakhilyas, loved the place.
But pitying their sad estate
The feathered monarch raised the weight
Of the huge bough, and bore away
The loosened load and captured prey.
A hundred leagues away he sped,
Then on his monstrous booty fed,
And with the bough he smote the lands
Where dwell the wild Nisháda bands.
High joy was his because his deed
From jeopardy the hermits freed.
That pride for great deliverance wrought
A double share of valour brought.
His soul conceived the high emprise
To snatch the Amrit from the skies.
He rent the nets of iron first,
Then through the jewel chamber burst,
And bore the drink of heaven away
That watched in Indra's palace lay.
Such was the hermit-sheltering tree
Which Rávaṇ turned his eye to see.
Still marked where Garuḍ sought to rest,
The fig-tree bore the name of Blest.
When Rávaṇ stayed his chariot o'er
The ocean's heart-enchanting shore,
He saw a hermitage that stood
Sequestered in the holy wood.
He saw the fiend Márícha there
With deerskin garb, and matted hair
Coiled up in hermit guise, who spent
His days by rule most abstinent.
As guest and host are wont to meet,
They met within that lone retreat.

Before the king Márícha placed
Food never known to human taste.
He entertained his guest with meat
And gave him water for his feet,
And then addressed the giant king
With timely words of questioning:
'Lord, is it well with thee, and well
With those in Lanká's town who dwell?
What sudden thought, what urgent need
Has brought thee with impetuous speed?'
The fiend Márícha thus addressed
Rávaṇ the king, his mighty guest,
And he, well skilled in arts that guide
The eloquent, in turn replied:

CANTO XXXVI.

RÁVAṆ'S SPEECH.

'Hear me, Márícha, while I speak, '
And tell thee why thy home I seek.
Sick and distressed am I, and see
My surest hope and help in thee.
Of Janasthán I need not tell,
Where Súrpaṇakhá, Khara, dwell,
And Dúshaṇ with the arm of might,
And Triśiras, the fierce in fight,
Who feeds on human flesh and gore,
And many noble giants more,
Who roam in dark of midnight through
The forest, brave and strong and true.
By my command they live at ease
And slaughter saints and devotees.
Those twice seven thousand giants, all
Obedient to their captain's call,
Joying in war and ruthless deeds
Follow where mighty Khara leads.
Those fearless warrior bands who roam
Through Janasthán their forest home,
In all their terrible array
Met Ráma in the battle fray.
Girt with all weapons forth they sped
With Khara at the army's head.
The front of battle Ráma held:
With furious wrath his bosom swelled.
Without a word his hate to show

He launched the arrows from his bow.
On the fierce hosts the missiles came,
Each burning with destructive flame.
The twice seven thousand fell o'erthrown
By him, a man, on foot, alone.
Khara the army's chief and pride,
And Dúshaṇ, fearless warrior, died,
And Triśiras the fierce was slain,
And Daṇḍak wood was free again.
He, banished by his angry śire,
Roams with his wife in mean attire.
This wretch, his Warrior tribe's disgrace,
Has slain the best of giant race.
Harsh, wicked, fierce, and greedy-souled,
A fool, with senses uncontrolled,
No thought of duty stirs his breast:
He joys to see the world distressed.
He sought the wood with fair pretence
Of truthful life and innocence,
But his false hand my sister left
Mangled, of nose and ears bereft.
This Ráma's wife who bears the name
Of Sítá, in her face and frame
Fair as a daughter of the skies,—
Her will I seize and bring the prize
Triumphant from the forest shade:
For this I seek thy willing aid.
If thou, O mighty one, wilt lend
Thy help and stand beside thy friend,
I with my brothers may defy
All Gods embattled in the sky.
Come, aid me now, for thine the power
To succour in the doubtful hour.
Thou art in war and time of fear,

For heart and hand, without a peer.
For thou art skilled in art and wile,
A warrior brave and trained in guile.
With this one hope, this only aim,
O Rover of the Night, I came.
Now let me tell what aid I ask
To back me in my purposed task.
In semblance of a golden deer
Adorned with silver spots appear.
Go, seek his dwelling: in the way
Of Ráma and his consort stray.
Doubt not the lady, when she sees
The wondrous deer amid the trees,
Will bid her lord and Lakshman take
The creature for its beauty's sake.
Then when the chiefs have parted thence,
And left her lone, without defence,
As Ráhu storms the moonlight, I
Will seize the lovely dame and fly.
Her lord will waste away and weep
For her his valour could not keep.
Then boldly will I strike the blow
And wreak my vengeance on the foe.'
When wise Márícha heard the tale
His heart grew faint, his cheek was pale:
He stared with open orbs, and tried
To moisten lips which terror dried,
And grief, like death, his bosom rent
As on the king his look he bent.
The monarch's will he strove to stay,
Distracted with alarm,
For well he knew the might that lay
In Ráma's matchless arm.
With suppliant hands Márícha stood

And thus began to tell
His counsel for the tyrant's good,
And for his own as well.

CANTO XXXVII.

MÁRÍCHA'S SPEECH.

Márícha gave attentive ear
The ruler of the fiends to hear;
Then, trained in all the rules that teach
The eloquent, began his speech:
"'Tis easy task, O King, to find
Smooth speakers who delight the mind.
But they who urge and they who do
Distasteful things and wise, are few.
Thou hast not learnt, by proof untaught,
And borne away by eager thought,
That Ráma, formed for high emprise,
With Varuṇ or with Indra vies.
Still let thy people live in peace,
Nor let their name and lineage cease,
For Ráma with his vengeful hand
Can sweep the giants from the land.
O, let not Janak's daughter bring
Destruction on the giant king.
Let not the lady Sítá wake
A tempest, on thy head to break.
Still let the dame, by care untried,
Be happy by her husband's side,
Lest swift avenging ruin fall
On glorious Lankâ, thee, and all.
Men such as thou with wills unchained,
Advised by sin and unrestrained,
Destroy themselves, the king, the state,

And leave the people desolate.
Ráma, in bonds of duty held,
Was never by his sire expelled.
He is no wretch of greedy mind,
Dishonour of his Warrior kind.
Free from all touch of rancorous spite,
All creatures' good is his delight:
He saw his sire of truthful heart
Deceived by Queen Kaikeyí's art,
And said, a true and duteous son,
'What thou hast promised shall be done.'
To gratify the lady's will,
His father's promise to fulfil,
He left his realm and all delight
For Daṇḍak wood, an anchorite.
No cruel wretch, no senseless fool
Is Ráma, unrestrained by rule.
This groundless charge has ne'er been heard,
Nor shouldst thou speak the slanderous word.
Ráma in truth and goodness bold
Is Virtue's self in human mould,
The sovereign of the world confessed
As Indra rules among the Blest.
And dost thou plot from him to rend
The darling whom his arms defend?
Less vain the hope to steal away
The glory of the Lord of Day.
O Rávaṇ, guard thee from the fire
Of vengeful Ráma's kindled ire,—
Each spark a shaft with deadly aim,
While bow and falchion feed the flame.
Cast not away in hopeless strife
Thy realm, thy bliss, thine own dear life.
O Rávaṇ, of his might beware,

A God of Death who will not spare.
That bow he knows so well to draw
Is the destroyer's flaming jaw,
And with his shafts which flash and glow
He slays the armies of the foe.
Thou ne'er canst win—the thought forgo—
From the safe guard of shaft and bow
King Janak's child, the dear delight
Of Ráma unapproached in might.
The spouse of Raghu's son, confessed
Lion of men with lion chest,—
Dearer than life, through good and ill
Devoted to her husband's will,
The slender-waisted, still must be
From thy polluting touches free.
Far better grasp with venturous hand
The flame to wildest fury fanned.
What, King of giants, canst thou gain
From this attempt so wild and vain?
If in the fight his eye he bend
Upon thee, Lord, thy days must end.
So life and bliss and royal sway,
Lost beyond hope, will pass away.
Summon each lord of high estate,
And chief, Vibhíshaṇ,[1] to debate.
With peers in lore of counsel tried
Consider, reason, and decide.
Scan strength and weakness, count the cost,
What may be gained and what be lost.

[1] The younger brother of the giant Rávaṇa; when he and his brothers had practised austerities for a long series of years, Brahmá appeared to offer them boons: Vibhíshaṇa asked that he might never meditate any unrighteousness..... .....On the death of Rávaṇa Vibhishaṇa was installed as Rája of Laṇká.' GARRETT'S *Classical Dictionary of India.*

Examine and compare aright
Thy proper power and Ráma's might,
Then if thy weal be still thy care
Thou wilt be prudent and forbear.
O giant King, the contest shun,
  Thy force is all too weak
The lord of Kośal's mighty son
  In deadly fray to seek.
King of the hosts that rove at night,
  O hear what I advise:
My prudent counsel do not slight;
  Be patient and be wise.'

CANTO XXXVIII.

MÁRÍCHA'S SPEECH.

'Once in my strength and vigour's pride
I roamed this earth from side to side,
And towering like a mountain's crest,
A thousand Nágas'[1] might possessed.
Like some vast sable cloud I showed:
My golden armlets flashed and glowed.
A crown I wore, an axe I swayed,
And all I met were sore afraid.
I roved where Daṇḍak wood is spread;
On flesh of slaughtered saints I fed.
Then Viśvámitra, sage revered,
Holy of heart, my fury feared.
To Daśaratha's court he sped
And went before the king and said:[2]
'With me, my lord, thy Ráma send
On holy days his aid to lend.
Márícha fills my soul with dread
And keeps me sore disquieted.'
The monarch heard the saint's request
And thus the glorious sage addressed:
'My boy as yet in arms untrained
The age of twelve has scarce attained.
But I myself a host will lead
To guard thee in the hour of need.
My host with fourfold troops complete,

[1] Serpent-gods.
[2] Vol. 1. p. 114.

The rover of the night shall meet,
And I, O best of saints, will kill
Thy foeman and thy prayer fulfil,'
The king vouchsafed his willing aid:
The saint again this answer made:
'By Ráma's might, and his alone,
Can this great fiend be overthrown.
I know in days of yore the Blest
Thy saving help in fight confessed.
Still of thy famous deeds they tell
In heaven above, in earth, and hell.
A mighty host obeys thy hest:
Here let it still, I pray thee, rest.
Thy glorious son, though yet a boy,
Will in the fight that fiend destroy.
Ráma alone with me shall go:
Be happy, victor of the foe.'
He spoke: the monarch gave assent,
And Ráma to the hermit lent.
So to his woodland home in joy
Went Viśvámitra with the boy.
With ready bow the champion stood
To guard the rites in Daṇḍak wood.
With glorious eyes, most bright to view,
Beardless as yet and dark of hue;
A single robe his only wear,
His temples veiled with waving hair,
Around his neck a chain of gold,
He grasped the bow he loved to hold;
And the young hero's presence made
A glory in the forest shade.
Thus Ráma with his beauteous mien
Like the young rising moon was seen.
I, like a cloud which tempest brings,

My arms adorned with golden rings,
Proud of the boon which lent me might,
Approached where dwelt the anchorite.
But Ráma saw me venturing nigh,
Raising my murderous axe on high;
He saw, and fearless of the foe,
Strung with calm hand his trusty bow.
By pride of conscious strength beguiled,
I scorned him as a feeble child,
And rushed with an impetuous bound
On Viśvámitra's holy ground.
A keen swift shaft he pointed well,
The foeman's rage to check and quell,
And hurled a hundred leagues away
Deep in the ocean waves I lay.
He would not kill, but, nobly brave,
My forfeit life he chose to save.
So there I lay with wandering sense
Dazed by that arrow's violence.
Long in the sea I lay: at length
Slowly returned my sense and strength,
And rising from my watery bed
To Laṅká's town again I sped.
Thus was I spared, but all my band
Fell slain by Ráma's conquering hand,—
A boy, untrained in warrior skill,
Of iron arm and dauntless will.
If thou with Ráma still, in spite
Of warning and of prayer, wilt fight,
I see terrific woes impend,
And dire defeat thy days will end.
Thy giants all will feel the blow
And share the fatal overthrow,
Who love the taste of joy and play,

The banquet and the festal day.
Thine eyes will see destruction take
Thy Lanká, lost for Sítá's sake,
And stately pile and palace fall
With terrace, dome, and jewelled wall.
The good will die: the crime of kings
Destruction on the people brings:
The sinless die, as in the lake
The fish must perish with the snake.
Thy prostrate giants thou wilt see
Slain for this folly wrought by thee,
Their bodies bright with precious scent
And sheen of heavenly ornament;
Or see the remnant of thy train
Seek refuge far, when help is vain,
And with their wives, or widowed, fly
To every quarter of the sky;
Thy mournful eyes, where'er they turn,
Will see thy stately city burn,
When royal homes with fire are red,
And arrowy nets around are spread.
A sin that tops all sins in shame
Is outrage to another's dame.
A thousand wives thy palace fill,
And countless beauties wait thy will.
O rest contented with thine own,
Nor let thy race be overthrown.
If thou, O King, hast still delight
In rank and wealth and power and might,
In noble wives, in troops of friends,
In all that royal state attends,
I warn thee, cast not all away,
Nor challenge Ráma to the fray.
If, deaf to every friendly prayer,

Thou still wilt seek the strife,
And from the side of Ráma tear
His lovely Maithil wife,
Soon will thy life and empire end
Destroyed by Ráma's bow,
And thou, with kith and kin and friend,
To Yama's realm must go.'

CANTO XXXIX.

MÁRÍCHA'S SPEECH.

'I told thee of that dreadful day
When Ráma smote and spared to slay.
Now hear me, Rávaṇ; while I tell
What in the after time befell.
At length, restored to strength and pride,
I and two mighty fiends beside
Assumed the forms of deer and strayed
Through Daṇḍak wood in lawn and glade.
I reared terrific horns: beneath
Were flaming tongue and pointed teeth.
I roamed where'er my fancy led,
And on the flesh of hermits fed,
In sacred haunt, by hallowed tree,
Where'er the ritual fires might be.
A fearful shape, I wandered through
The wood, and many a hermit slew.
With ruthless rage the saints I killed
Who in the grove their tasks fulfilled.
When smitten to the earth they sank,
Their flesh I ate, their blood I drank,
And with my cruel deeds dismayed
All dwellers in the forest shade,
Spoiling their rites in bitter hate,
With human blood inebriate.
Once in the wood I chanced to see
Ráma again, a devotee,
A hermit, fed on scanty fare,

Who made the good of all his care.
His noble wife was by his side,
And Lakshman in the battle tried.
In senseless pride I scorned the might
Of that illustrious anchorite,
And heedless of a hermit foe,
Recalled my earlier overthrow.
I charged him in my rage and scorn
To slay him with my pointed horn,
In heedless haste, to fury wrought
As on my former wounds I thought.
Then from the mighty bow he drew
Three foe-destroying arrows flew,
Keen-pointed, leaping from the string
Swift as the wind or feathered king.
Dire shafts, on flesh of foemen fed,
Like rushing thunderbolts they sped.
With knots well smoothed and barbs well bent,
Shot e'en as one, the arrows went.
But I who Ráma's might had felt,
And knew the blows the hero dealt,
Escaped by rapid flight. The two
Who lingered on the spot, he slew.
I fled from mortal danger, freed
From the dire shaft by timely speed.
Now to deep thought my days I give,
And as a humble hermit live.
In every shrub, in every tree
I view that noblest devotee.
In every knotted trunk I mark
His deerskin and his coat of bark,
And see the bow-armed Rama stand
Like Yama with his noose in hand.
I tell thee Rávaṇ, in my fright

A thousand Rámas mock my sight.
This wood with every bush and bough
Seems all one fearful Ráma now.
Throughout the grove there is no spot
So lonely where I see him not.
He haunts me in my dreams by night,
And wakes me with the wild affright.
The letter that begins his name
Sends terror through my startled frame.
The rapid cars whereon we ride,
The rich rare jewels, once my pride,
Have names[1] that strike upon mine ear
With hated sound that counsels fear.
His mighty strength too well I know,
Nor art thou match for such a foe.
Too strong were Raghu's son in fight
For Namuchi or Bali's might.
Then Ráma to the battle dare,
Or else be patient and forbear;
But, wouldst thou see me live in peace,
Let mention of the hero cease.
The good whose holy lives were spent
In deepest thought, most innocent,
With all their people many a time
Have perished through another's crime.
So in the common ruin, I
Must for another's folly die.
Do all thy strength and courage can,
But ne'er will I approve the plan.
For he, in might supremely great,
The giant world could extirpate,
Since, when impetuous Khara sought
The grove of Janasthán and fought

[1] The Sanskrit words for car and jewels begin with *ra*.

For Súrpaṇakhá's sake, he died
By Ráma's hand in battle tried.
How has he wronged thee? Soothly swear,
And Ráma's fault and sin declare.
I warn thee, and my words are wise,
I seek thy people's weal:
But if this rede thou wilt despise,
Nor hear my last appeal,
Thou with thy kin and all thy friends
In fight this day wilt die,
When his great bow the hero bends,
And shafts unerring fly.'

CANTO XL.

RÁVAṆ'S SPEECH.

But Rávaṇ scorned the rede he gave
In timely words to warn and save,
E'en as the wretch who hates to live
Rejects the herb the leeches give.
By fate to sin and ruin spurred,
That sage advice the giant heard,
Then in reproaches hard and stern
Thus to Márícha spoke in turn:
'Is this thy counsel, weak and base,
Unworthy of thy giant race?
Thy speech is fruitless, vain thy toil
Like casting seed on barren soil.
No words of thine shall drive me back
From Ráma and the swift attack.
A fool is he, inured to sin,
And more, of human origin.
The craven, at a woman's call
To leave his sire, his mother, all
The friends he loved, the power and sway,
And hasten to the woods away!
But now his anger will I rouse,
Stealing away his darling spouse.
I in thy sight will ravish her
From Khara's cruel murderer.
Upon this plan my soul is bent,
And naught shall move my firm intent,
Not if the way through demons led

And Gods with Indra at their head.
'Tis thine, when questioned, to explain
The hope and fear, the loss and gain,
And, when thy king thy thoughts would know,
The triumph or the danger show.
A prudent counsellor should wait,
And speak when ordered in debate,
With hands uplifted, calm and meek,
If honour and reward he seek.
Or, when some prudent course he sees
Which, spoken, may his king displease,
He should by hints of dexterous art
His counsel to his lord impart.
But prudent words are said in vain
When the blunt speech brings grief and pain.
A high-souled king will scarcely thank
The man who shames his royal rank.
Five are the shapes that kings assume,
Of majesty, of grace, and gloom:
Like Indra now, or Agni, now
Like the dear Moon, with placid brow:
Like mighty Varuṇ now they show,
Now fierce as He who rules below.
O giant, monarchs lofty-souled
Are kind and gentle, stern and bold,
With gracious love their gifts dispense
And swiftly punish each offence.
Thus subjects should their rulers view
With all respect and honour due.
But folly leads thy heart to slight
Thy monarch and neglect his right.
Thou hast in lawless pride addressed
With bitter words thy royal guest.
I asked thee not my strength to scan,

Or loss and profit in the plan.'
I only spoke to tell the deed
O mighty one, by me decreed,
And bid thee in the peril lend
Thy succour to support thy friend.
Hear me again, and I will tell
How thou canst aid my venture well.
In semblance of a golden deer
Adorned with silver drops, appear;
And near the cottage in the way
Of Ráma and his consort stray.
Draw nigh, and wandering through the brake
With thy strange form her fancy take.
The Maithil dame with wondering eyes
Will look upon thy fair disguise,
And quickly bid her husband go
And bring the deer that charms her so.
When Raghu's son has left the place,
Still pressing onward in the chase,
Cry out, 'O Lakshman! Ah, mine own!'
With voice resembling Ráma's tone.
When Lakshman hears his brother's cry,
Impelled by Sítá he will fly,
Restless with eager love, to aid
The hunter in the distant shade.
When both her guards have left her side,
Even as Indra, thousand-eyed,
Clasps Śachí, will I bear away
The Maithil dame an easy prey.
When thou, my friend, this aid hast lent,
Go where thou wilt and live content.
True servant, faithful to thy vow,
With half my realm I thee endow.
Go forth, may luck thy way attend

That leads thee to the happy end.
I in my car will quickly be
In Daṇḍak wood, and follow thee.
So will I cheat this Ráma's eyes
And win without a blow the prize;
And safe return to Lanká's town
With thee, my friend, this day shall crown.
But if thou wilt not aid my will,
My hand this day thy blood shall spill.
Yea, thou must share the destined task,
For force will take the help I ask.
No bliss that rebel's life attends
Whose stubborn will his lord offends.
Thy life, if thou the task assay,
In jeopardy may stand;
Oppose me, and this very day
Thou diest by this hand.
Now ponder all that thou hast heard
Within thy prudent breast:
Reflect with care on every word,
And do what seems the best.'

CANTO XLI.

MÁRÍCHA'S REPLY.

Against his judgment sorely pressed
By his imperious lord's behest,
Márícha threats of death defied,
And thus with bitter words replied :
'Ah, who, my King, with sinful thought
This wild and wicked counsel taught,
By which destruction soon will fall
On thee, thy sons, thy realm and all ?
Who is the guilty wretch who sees
With envious eye thy blissful ease,
And by this plan, so falsely shown,
Death's gate for thee has open thrown ?
With souls impelled by mean desire
Thy foes against thy life conspire.
They urge thee to destruction's brink,
And gladly would they see thee sink.
Who with base thought to work thee woe
This fatal road has dared to show,
And, triumph in his wicked eye,
Would see thee enter in and die?
To all thy counsellors, untrue,
The punishment of death is due,
Who see thee tempt the dangerous way,
Nor strain each nerve thy foot to stay.
Wise lords, whose king, by passion led,
The path of sin begins to tread,
Restrain him while there yet is time :

But thine,—they see nor heed the crime.
These by their master's will obtain
Merit and fame and joy and gain.
'Tis only by their master's grace
That servants hold their lofty place.
But when the monarch stoops to sin
They lose each joy they strove to win,
And all the people high and low
Fall in the common overthrow.
Merit and fame and honour spring,
Best of the mighty, from the king.
So all should strive with heart and will
To keep the king from every ill:
Pride, violence, and sullen hate
Will ne'er maintain a monarch's state,
And those who cruel deeds advise
Must perish when their master dies,
Like drivers with their cars o'erthrown
In places rough with root and stone.
The good whose holy lives were spent
On duty's highest laws intent,
With wives and children many a time
Have perished for another's crime.
Hapless are they whose sovereign lord,
Opposed to all, by all abhorred,
Is cruel-hearted, harsh, severe:
Thus might a jackal tend the deer.
Now all the giant race await,
Destroyed by thee, a speedy fate,
Ruled by a king so cruel-souled,
Foolish in heart and uncontrolled.
Think not I fear the sudden blow
That threatens now to lay me low:
I mourn the ruin that I see

Impending o'er thy host and thee.
Me first perchance will Ráma kill,
But soon his hand thy blood will spill.
I die, and if by Ráma slain
And not by thee, I count it gain.
Soon as the hero's face I see
His angry eyes will murder me,
And if on her thy hands thou lay
Thy friends and thou are dead this day.
If with my help thou still must dare
The lady from her lord to tear,
Farewell to all! our days are o'er,
Lanká and giants are no more.
In vain, in vain, an earnest friend,
I warn thee, King, and pray.
Thou wilt not to my prayers attend,
Or heed the words I say.
So men, when life is fleeting fast
And death's sad hour is nigh,
Heedless and blinded to the last
Reject advice and die.'

CANTO XLII.

MÁRÍCHA TRANSFORMED.

Márícha thus in wild unrest
With bitter words the king addressed.
Then to his giant lord in dread,
'Arise, and let us go,' he said.
'Ah, I have met that mighty lord
Armed with his shafts and bow and sword,
And if again that bow he bend
Our lives that very hour will end.
For none that warrior can provoke
And think to fly his deadly stroke.
Like Yama with his staff is he,
And his dread hand will slaughter thee.
What can I more? my words can find
No passage to thy stubborn mind.
I go, great King, thy task to share,
And may success attend thee there.'
With that reply and bold consent
The giant king was well content.
He strained Márícha to his breast
And thus with joyful words addressed:
'There spoke a hero dauntless still,
Obedient to his master's will,
Márícha's proper self once more:
Some other took thy shape before.
Come, mount my jewelled car that flies,
Will-governed, through the yielding skies.
These asses, goblin-faced, shall bear

Us quickly through the fields of air.
Attract the lady with thy shape,
Then through the wood, at will, escape.
And I, when she has no defence,
Will seize the dame and bear her thence.'
Again Márícha made reply,
Consent and will to signify.
With rapid speed the giant two
From the calm hermit dwelling flew,
Borne in that wondrous chariot, meet
For some great God's celestial seat.
They from their airy path looked down
On many a wood and many a town,
On lake and river, brook and rill,
City and realm and towering hill.
Soon he whom giant hosts obeyed,
Márícha by his side, surveyed
The dark expanse of Daṇḍak wood
Where Ráma's hermit cottage stood.
They left the flying car, whereon
The wealth of gold and jewels shone,
And thus the giant king addressed
Márícha as his hand he pressed:
'Márícha, look! before our eyes
Round Ráma's home the plantains rise.
His hermitage is now in view:
Quick to the work we came to do!'
Thus Rávaṇ spoke. Márícha heard
Obedient to his master's word,
Threw off his giant shape, and near
The cottage strayed a beauteous deer.
With magic power, by rapid change,
His borrowed form was fair and strange.
A sapphire tipped each horn with light;

His face was black relieved with white.
The turkis and the ruby shed
A glory from his ears and head.
His arching neck was proudly raised,
And lazulites beneath it blazed.
With roseate bloom his flanks were dyed,
And lotus tints adorned his hide.
His shape was fair, compact, and slight;
His hoofs were carven lazulite.
His tail with every changing glow
Displayed the hues of Indra's bow.
With glossy skin so strangely flecked,
With tints of every gem bedecked,
A light o'er Ráma's home he sent,
And through the wood, where'er he went.
The giant clad in that strange dress
That took the soul with loveliness,
To charm the fair Videhan's eyes
With mingled wealth of mineral dyes,
Moved onward, cropping in his way,
The grass and grain and tender spray.
His coat with drops of silver bright,
A form to gaze on with delight,
He raised his fair neck as he went
To browse on bud and filament.
Now in the Cassia grove he strayed,
Now by the cot in plantains' shade.
Slowly and slowly on he came
To catch the glances of the dame,
And the tall deer of splendid hue
Shone full at length in Sítá's view.
He roamed where'er his fancy chose
Where Ráma's leafy cottage rose.
Now near, now far, in careless ease,

He came and went among the trees.
Now with light feet he turned to fly,
Now, reassured, again drew nigh:
Now gambolled close with leap and bound,
Now lay upon the grassy ground:
Now sought the door, devoid of fear,
And mingled with the troop of deer;
Led them a little way, and thence
Again returned with confidence.
Now flying far, now turning back
Emboldened on his former track,
Seeking to win the lady's glance
He wandered through the green expanse.
Then thronging round, the woodland deer
Gazed on his form with wondering fear;
A while they followed where he led,
Then snuffed the tainted gale and fled.
The giant, though he longed to slay
The startled quarry, spared the prey,
And mindful of the shape he wore
To veil his nature, still forbore.
Then Sítá of the glorious eye,
Returning from her task drew nigh:
For she had sought the wood to bring
Each loveliest flower of early spring.
Now would the bright-eyed lady choose
Some gorgeous bud with blending hues,
Now plucked the mango's spray, and now
The bloom from an Aśoka bough.
She with her beauteous form, unmeet
For woodland life and lone retreat,
That wondrous dappled deer beheld
Gemmed with rich pearls, unparalleled.
His silver hair the lady saw,

His radiant teeth and lips and jaw,
And gazed with rapture as her eyes
Expanded in their glad surprise.
And when the false deer's glances fell
On her whom Ráma loved so well,
He wandered here and there, and cast
A luminous beauty as he passed;
And Janak's child with strange delight
Kept gazing on the unwonted sight.

CANTO XLIII.

THE WONDROUS DEER.

She stooped, her hands with flowers to fill,
But gazed upon the marvel still:
Gazed on its back and sparkling side
Where silver hues with golden vied.
Joyous was she of faultless mould,
With glossy skin like polished gold,
And loudly to her husband cried
And bow-armed Lakshman by his side:
Again, again she called in glee:
'O come, this glorious creature see;
Quick, quick, my lord, this deer to view,
And bring thy brother Lakshman too.'
As through the wood her clear tones rang,
Swift to her side the brothers sprang.
With eager eyes the grove they scanned,
And saw the deer before them stand.
But doubt was strong in Lakshman's breast,
Who thus his thought and fear expressed:
'Stay, for the wondrous deer we see
The fiend Márícha's self may be.
Ere now have kings who sought this place
To take their pastime in the chase,
Met from his wicked art defeat,
And fallen slain by like deceit.
He wears, well trained in magic guile,
The figure of a deer a while,
Bright as the very sun, or place

Where dwell the gay Gandharva race.
No deer, O Ráma, e'er was seen
Thus decked with gold and jewels' sheen.
'Tis magic, for the world has ne'er,
Lord of the world, shown aught so fair.'
But Sítá of the lovely smile,
A captive to the giant's wile,
Turned Lakshmaṇ's prudent speech aside
And thus with eager words replied:
'My honoured lord, this deer I see
With beauty rare enraptures me.
Go, chief of mighty arm, and bring
For my delight this precious thing.
Fair creatures of the woodland roam
Untroubled near our hermit home.
The forest cow and stag are there,
The fawn, the monkey, and the bear,
Where spotted deer delight to play,
And strong and beauteous Kinnars[1] stray.
But never, as they wandered by,
Has such a beauty charmed mine eye
As this with limbs so fair and slight,
So gentle beautiful and bright.
O see, how fair it is to view
With jewels of each varied hue:
Bright as the rising moon it glows,
Lighting the wood where'er it goes.
Ah me, what form and grace are there!
Its limbs how fine, its hues how fair!
Transcending all that words express,
It takes my soul with loveliness.
O, if thou would, to please me, strive

[1] A race of beings of human shape but with the heads of horses, like centaurs reversed.

To take the beauteous thing alive,
How thou wouldst gaze with wondering eyes
Delighted on the lovely prize!
And when our woodland life is o'er,
And we enjoy our realm once more,
The wondrous animal will grace
The chambers of my dwelling-place,
And a dear treasure will it be
To Bharat and the queens and me,
And all with rapture and amaze
Upon its heavenly form will gaze.
But if the beauteous deer, pursued,
Thine arts to take it still elude,
Strike it, O chieftain, and the skin
Will be a treasure, laid within.
O, how I long my time to pass
Sitting upon the tender grass,
With that soft fell beneath me spread
Bright with its hair of golden thread!
This strong desire, this eager will,
Befits a gentle lady ill;
But when I first beheld, its look
My breast with fascination took.
See, golden hair its flank adorns,
And sapphires tip its branching horns.
Resplendent as the lunar way,
Or the first blush of opening day,
With graceful form and radiant hue
It charmed thy heart, O chieftain, too.'

He heard her speech with willing ear,
He looked again upon the deer.
Its lovely shape his breast beguiled
Moved by the prayer of Janak's child,
And yielding for her pleasure's sake,

To Lakshmaṇ Ráma turned and spake:
'Mark, Lakshmaṇ, mark how Sítá's breast
With eager longing is possessed.
To-day this deer of wondrous breed
Must for his passing beauty bleed,
Brighter than e'er in Nandan strâyed,
Or Chaitraratha's heavenly shade.
How should the groves of earth possess
Such all-surpassing loveliness!
The hair lies smooth and bright and fine,
Or waves upon each curving line,
And drops of living gold bedeck
The beauty of his side and neck.
O look, his crimson tongue between
His teeth like flaming fire is seen,
Flashing, whene'er his lips he parts,
As from a cloud the lightning darts.
O see his sunlike forehead shine
With emerald tints and almandine,
While pearly light and roseate glow
Of shells adorn his neck below.
No eye on such a deer can rest
But soft enchantment takes the breast:
No man so fair a thing behold
Ablaze with light of radiant gold,
Celestial, bright with jewels' sheen,
Nor marvel when his eyes have seen.
A king equipped with bow and shaft
Delights in gentle forest craft,
And as in boundless woods he strays
The quarry for the venison slays.
There as he wanders with his train
A store of wealth he oft may gain.
He claims by right the precious ore,

He claims the jewels' sparkling store.
Such gains are dearer in his eyes
Than wealth that in his chamber lies,
The dearest things his spirit knows,
Dear as the bliss which Śukra chose.
But oft the rich expected gain
Which heedless men pursue in vain,
The sage, who prudent counsels know,
Explain and in a moment show.
This best of deer, this gem of all,
To yield his precious spoils must fall,
And tender Śítá by my side
Shall sit upon the golden hide.
Ne'er could I find so rich a coat
On spotted deer or sheep or goat.
No buck or antelope has such,
So bright to view, so soft to touch.
This radiant deer and one on high
That moves in glory through the sky,
Alike in heavenly beauty are,
One on the earth and one a star.
But, brother, if thy fears be true,
And this bright creature that we view
Be fierce Márícha in disguise,
Then by this hand he surely dies.
For that dire fiend who spurns control
With bloody hand and cruel soul,
Has roamed this forest and dismayed
The holiest saints who haunt the shade.
Great archers, sprung of royal race,
Pursuing in the wood the chase,
Have fallen by his wicked art,
And now my shaft shall strike his heart.
Vátápi, by his magic power

Made heedless saints his flesh devour,
Then, from within, their frames he rent
Forth bursting from imprisonment.
But once his art in senseless pride
Upon the mightiest saint he tried,
Agastya's self, and caused him taste
The baited meal before him placed.
Vátápi, when the rite was o'er,
Would take the giant form he wore;
But Saint Agastya knew his wile,
And checked the giant with a smile:
'Vátápi, thou with cruel spite
Hast conquered many an anchorite,
The noblest of the Bráhman caste,—
And now thy ruin comes at last.'
Now if my power he thus defies,
This giant, like Vátápi, dies,
Daring to scorn a man like me,
A self-subduing devotee.
Yea, as Agastya slew the foe,
My hand shall lay Márícha low.
Clad in thine arms, thy bow in hand,
To guard the Maithil lady stand,
With watchful eye and thoughtful breast
Keeping each word of my behest.
I go, and hunting through the brake
This wondrous deer will kill or take.
Yea, surely I will bring the spoil
Returning from my hunter's toil.
See, Lakshman, how my consort's eyes
Are longing for the lovely prize.
This day it falls, that I may win
The treasure of so fair a skin.
Do thou and Sítá watch with care

Lest danger seize you unaware.
Swift from my bow one shaft will fly ;
The stricken deer will fall and die.
Then quickly will I strip the game
And bring the trophy to my dame.
Jaṭáyus, guardian good and wise,
Our old and faithful friend,
The best and strongest bird that flies,
His willing aid will lend.
The Maithil lady well protect,
For every chance provide,
And in thy tender care suspect
A foe on every side.'

CANTO XLIV.

MÁRÍCHA'S DEATH.

Thus having warned his brother bold
He grasped his sword with haft of gold,
And bow with triple flexure bent,
His own delight and ornament;
Then bound two quivers to his side,
And hurried forth with eager stride.
Soon as the antlered monarch saw
The lord of monarchs near him draw,
A while with trembling heart he fled,
Then turned and showed his stately head.
With sword and bow the chief pursued
Where'er the flying deer he viewed
Sending from dell and lone recess
The splendour of his loveliness.
Now full in view the creature stood,
Now vanished in the depth of wood;
Now luring with a languid flight,
Now like a meteor lost to sight.
With trembling limbs away he sped;
Then like the moon with clouds o'erspread
Gleamed for a moment bright between
The trees, and was again unseen.
Thus in the magic deer's disguise
Márícha lured him to the prize,
And seen a while, then lost to view,
Far from his cot the hero drew.
Still by the flying game deceived

The hunter's heart was wroth and grieved,
And wearied with the fruitless chase
He stayed him in a shady place.
Again the rover of the night
Enraged the chieftain, full in sight,
Slow moving in the coppice near,
Surrounded by the woodland deer.
Again the hunter sought the game
That seemed a while to court his aim:
But seized again with sudden dread,
Beyond his sight the creature fled.
Again the hero left the shade,
Again the deer before him strayed.
With surer hope and stronger will
The hunter longed his prey to kill.
Then, as his soul impatient grew,
An arrow from his side he drew,
Resplendent as the sunbeam's glow,
The crusher of the smitten foe.
With skilful heed the mighty lord
Fixed well the shaft and strained the cord.
Upon the deer his eyes he bent,
And like a fiery serpent went
The arrow Brahmá's self had framed,
Alive with sparks that hissed and flamed.
Like Indra's flashing levin, true
To the false deer the missile flew.
Cleaving his flesh, that wondrous dart
Stood quivering in Márícha's heart.
Scarce from the ground one foot he sprang,
Then stricken fell with deadly pang.
Half lifeless, as he pressed the ground,
He gave a roar of awful sound,
And ere the wounded giant died

He threw his borrowed form aside.
Remembering still his lord's behest
He pondered in his heart how best
Sítá might send her guard away,
And Rávaṇ seize the helpless prey.
The monster knew the time was nigh,
And called aloud with eager cry,
'Ho, Sítá, Lakshman!' and the tone
He borrowed was like Ráma's own.
So by that matchless arrow cleft,
The deer's bright form Márícha left,
Resumed his giant shape and size
And closed in death his languid eyes.
When Ráma saw his awful foe
Gasp, smeared with blood, in deadly throe,
His anxious thoughts to Sítá sped,
And the wise words that Lakshmaṇ said,
That this was false Márícha's art,
Returned again upon his heart.
He knew the foe he triumphed o'er
The name of great Márícha bore.
'The fiend,' he pondered, 'ere he died,
'Ho, Lakshman! ho, my Sítá!' cried.
Ah, if that cry has reached her ear,
How dire must be my darling's fear!
And Lakshmaṇ of the mighty arm,
What thinks he in his wild alarm?'
As thus he thought in sad surmise,
Each startled hair began to rise;
And when he saw the giant slain
And thought upon that cry again,
His spirit sank and terror pressed
Full sorely on the hero's breast.
Another deer he chased and struck:

He bore away the fallen buck,
To Janasthán then turned his face
And hastened to his dwelling-place.

CANTO XLV.

LAKSHMAṆ'S DEPARTURE.

But Sítá hearing, as she thought,
Her husband's cry with anguish fraught,
Called to her guardian, 'Lakshmaṇ, run
And in the wood seek Raghu's son.
Scarce can my heart retain its throne,
Scarce can my life be called mine own,
As all my powers and senses fail
At that long loud and bitter wail.
Haste to the wood with all thy speed
And save thy brother in his need.
Go, save him in the distant shade
Where loud he calls for timely aid.
He falls beneath some giant foe—
A bull whom lions overthrow.'
Deaf to her prayer, no step he stirred
Obedient to his brother's word.
Then Janak's child, with ire inflamed,
In words of bitter scorn exclaimed:
'Sumitrá's son, a friend in show,
Thou art in truth thy brother's foe,
Who canst at such an hour deny
Thy succour and neglect his cry.
Yes, Lakshmaṇ, smit with love of me
Thy brother's death thou fain wouldst see.
This guilty love thy heart has swayed
And makes thy feet so loth to aid.
Thou hast no love for Ráma, no:

Thy joy is vice, thy thoughts are low.
Hence thus unmoved thou yet canst stay
While my dear lord is far away.
If aught of ill my lord betide
Who led thee here, thy chief and guide,
Ah, what will be my hapless fate
Left in the wild wood desolate!'

Thus spoke the lady sad with fear,
With many a sigh and many a tear,
Still trembling like a captured doe:
And Lakshman spoke to calm her woe:

'Videhan Queen, be sure of this,—
And at the thought thy fear dismiss,—
Thy husband's mightier power defies
All Gods and angels of the skies,
Gandharvas, and the sons of light,
Serpents, and rovers of the night.
I tell thee, of the sons of earth,
Of Gods who boast celestial birth,
Of beasts and birds and giant hosts,
Of demigods, Gandharvas, ghosts,
Of awful fiends, O thou most fair,
There lives not one whose heart would dare
To meet thy Ráma in the fight,
Like Indra's self unmatched in might.
Such idle words thou must not say:
Thy Ráma lives whom none may slay.
I will not, cannot leave thee here
In the wild wood till he be near.
The mightiest strength can ne'er withstand
His eager force, his vigorous hand:
No, not the triple world allied
With all the immortal Gods beside.
Dismiss thy fear, again take heart,

Let all thy doubt and woe depart.
Thy lord, be sure, will soon be here
And bring thee back that best of deer.
Not his, not his that mournful cry,
Nor haply came it from the sky:
Some giant's art was busy there
And framed a castle based on air.
A precious pledge art thou, consigned
To me by him of noblest mind;
Nor can I, fairest dame, forsake
The pledge which Ráma bade me take.
Upon our heads, O Queen, we drew
The giants' hate when Ráma slew
Their chieftain Khara, and the shade
Of Janasthán in ruin laid.
Through all this mighty wood they rove
With varied cries from grove to grove.
On rapine bent they wander here:
But O, dismiss thy causeless fear.'

Bright flashed her eye as Lakshman spoke,
And forth her words of fury broke
Upon her truthful guardian, flung
With bitter taunts that pierced and stung:
'Shame on such false compassion, base
Defiler of thy glorious race!
'Twere joyous sight, I ween, to thee
My lord in direst strait to see.
Thou knowest Ráma sore bested,
Or word like this thou ne'er hadst said.
No marvel if we find such sin
In rivals false to kith and kin,
Wretches like thee of evil kind,
Concealing crime with crafty mind.
Thou, wretch, thine aid wilt still deny,

And leave my lord alone to die.
Has love of me unnerved thy hand,
Or Bharat's art this ruin planned?
But be the treachery his or thine,
In vain, in vain the base design.
For how shall I, the chosen bride
Of dark-hued Ráma, lotus-eyed,
The queen who once called Ráma mine,
To love of other men decline?
Believe me, Lakshman, Ráma's wife
Before thine eyes will quit this life,
And not a moment will she stay
If her dear lord have passed away.'

The lady's bitter speech, that stirred
Each hair upon his frame, he heard.
With lifted hands together laid,
His calm reply he gently made:
'No words have I to answer now:
My deity, O Queen, art thou.
But 'tis no marvel, dame, to find
Such lack of sense in womankind.
Throughout this world, O Maithil dame,
Weak women's hearts are still the same.
Inconstant, urged by envious spite,
They sever friends and hate the right.
I cannot brook, Videhan Queen,
Thy words intolerably keen.
Mine ears thy fierce reproaches pain
As boiling water seethes the brain.
And now to bear me witness all
The dwellers in the wood I call,
That, when with words of truth I plead,
This harsh reply is all my meed.
Ah, woe is thee! Ah, grief, that still

Eager to do my brother's will,
Mourning thy woman's nature, I
Must see thee doubt my truth and die.
I fly to Ráma's side, and Oh,
May bliss attend thee while I go!
May all attendant wood-gods screen,
Thy head from harm, O large-eyed Queen!
And though dire omens meet my sight
And fill my soul with wild affright,
May I return in peace and see
The son of Raghu safe with thee!'

The child of Janak heard him speak,
And the hot tear-drops down her cheek,
Increasing to a torrent, ran,
As thus once more the dame began:
'O Lakshman, if I widowed be
Godávarí's flood shall cover me,
Or I will die by cord, or leap,
Life-weary, from yon rocky steep;
Or deadly poison will I drink,
Or neath the kindled flames will sink,
But never, reft of Ráma, can
Consent to touch a meaner man.'

The Maithil dame with many sighs,
And torrents pouring from her eyes,
The faithful Lakshman thus addressed,
And smote her hands upon her breast.
Sumitrá's son, o'erwhelmed by fears,
Looked on the large-eyed queen:
He saw that flood of burning tears,
He saw that piteous mien.
He yearned sweet comfort to afford,
He strove to soothe her pain:
But to the brother of her lord

She spoke no word again.
His reverent hands once more he raised,
His head he slightly bent,
Upon her face he sadly gazed,
And then toward Ráma went.

CANTO XLVI.

THE GUEST.

The angry Lakshmaṇ scarce could brook
Her bitter words, her furious look.
With dark forebodings in his breast
To Ráma's side he quickly pressed.
Then ten-necked Rávaṇ saw the time
Propitious for his purposed crime.
A mendicant in guise he came
And stood before the Maithil dame.
His garb was red, with tufted hair
And sandalled feet a shade he bare,
And from the fiend's left shoulder slung
A staff and water-vessel hung.
Near to the lovely dame he drew,
While both the chiefs were far from view,
As darkness takes the evening air
When neither sun nor moon is there.
He bent his eye upon the dame,
A princess fair, of spotless fame:
So might some baleful planet be
Near Moon-forsaken Rohiṇí.[1]
As the fierce tyrant nearer drew,
The trees in Janasthán that grew
Waved not a leaf for fear and woe,
And the hushed wind forbore to blow.
Godávarí's waters as they fled,
Saw his fierce eye-balls flashing red,

[1] The favourite wife of the Moon.

And from each swiftly-gliding wave
A melancholy murmur gave.
Then Rávaṇ, when his eager eye
Beheld the longed-for moment nigh,
In mendicant's apparel dressed
Near to the Maithil lady pressed.
In holy guise, a fiend abhorred,
He found her mourning for her lord.
Thus threatening draws Śaniśchar[1] nigh
To Chitrá[2] in the evening sky;
Thus the deep well by grass concealed
Yawns treacherous in the verdant field.
He stood and looked upon the dame
Of Ráma, queen of spotless fame.
With her bright teeth and each fair limb
Like the full moon she seemed to him,
Sitting within her leafy cot,
Weeping for woe that left her not.
Thus, while with joy his pulses beat,
He saw her in her lone retreat;
Eyed like the lotus, fair to view
In silken robes of amber hue.
Pierced to the core by Káma's dart
He murmured texts with lying art,
And questioned with a soft address
The lady in her loneliness.
The fiend essayed with gentle speech
The heart of that fair dame to reach,
Pride of the worlds, like Beauty's Queen
Without her darling lotus seen:
'O thou whose silken robes enfold
A form more fair than finest gold,

[1] The planet Saturn.
[2] Another favourite of the Moon; one of the lunar mansions.

With lotus garland on thy head,
Like a sweet spring with bloom o'erspread,
Who art thou, fair one, what thy name,
Beauty, or Honour, Fortune, Fame,
Spirit, or nymph, or Queen of love
Descended from thy home above?
Bright as the dazzling jasmine shine
Thy small square teeth in level line.
Like two black stars aglow with light
Thine eyes are large and pure and bright.
Thy charms of smile and teeth and hair
And winning eyes, O thou most fair,
Steal all my spirit, as the flow
Of rivers mines the bank below.
How bright, how fine each flowing tress!
How firm those orbs beneath thy dress!
That dainty waist with ease were spanned,
Sweet lady, by a lover's hand.
Mine eyes, O beauty, ne'er have seen
Goddess or nymph so fair of mien,
Or bright Ghandharva's heavenly dame,
Or woman of so perfect frame.
In youth's soft prime thy years are few,
And earth has naught so fair to view.
I marvel one like thee in face
Should make the woods her dwelling-place.
Leave, lady, leave this lone retreat
In forest wilds for thee unmeet,
Where giants fierce and strong assume
All shapes and wander in the gloom.
Those dainty feet were formed to tread
Some palace floor with carpets spread,
Or wander in trim gardens where
Each opening bud perfumes the air.

The richest robe thy form should deck,
The rarest gems adorn thy neck.
The sweetest wreath should bind thy hair,
The noblest lord thy bed should share.
Art thou akin, O fair of form,
To Rudras,[1] or the Gods of storm,[2]
Or to the glorious Vasus[3]? How
Can less than these be bright as thou?
But never nymph or heavenly maid
Or Goddess haunts this gloomy shade.
Here giants roam, a savage race:
What led thee to so dire a place?
Here monkeys leap from tree to tree,
And bears and tigers wander free;
Here ravening lions prowl, and fell
Hyenas in the thickets yell,
And elephants infuriate roam,
Mighty and fierce, their woodland home.
Dost thou not dread, so soft and fair,
Tiger and lion wolf and bear?
Hast thou, O beauteous dame, no fear
In the wild wood so lone and drear?
Whose and who art thou? whence and why,
Sweet lady, with no guardian nigh,
Dost thou this awful forest tread
By giant bands inhabited?'
The praise the high-souled Rávaṇ spoke
No doubt within her bosom woke.
His saintly look and Bráhman guise
Deceived the lady's trusting eyes.
With due attention on the guest

[1] The Rudras, agents in creation, are eight in number; they sprang from the forehead of Brahmá.

[2] Maruts, the attendants of Indra.

[3] Radiant demi-gods.

Her hospitable rites she pressed.
She bade the stranger to a seat,
And gave him water for his feet.
The bowl and water-pot he bare,
And garb which wandering Bráhmans wear
Forbade a doubt to rise.
Won by his holy look she deemed
The stranger even as he seemed
To her deluded eyes.
Intent on hospitable care,
She brought her best of woodland fare,
And showed her guest a seat.
She bade the saintly stranger lave
His feet in water which she gave,
And sit and rest and eat.
He kept his eager glances bent
On her so kindly eloquent,
Wife of the noblest king;
And longed in heart to steal her thence,
Preparing by the dire offence
Death on his head to bring.
The lady watched with anxious face
For Ráma coming from the chase
With Lakshman by his side:
But nothing met her wandering glance
Save the wild forest's green expanse
Extending far and wide.

CANTO XLVII.

RÁVAṆ'S WOOING.

As, clad in mendicant's disguise,
He questioned thus his destined prize,
She to the seeming saintly man
The story of her life began.
'My guest is he,' she thought,' and I,
To scape his curse, must needs reply :'
'Child of a noble sire I spring
From Janak, fair Videha's king.
May every good be thine ! my name
Is Sítá, Ráma's cherished dame.
Twelve winters with my lord I spent
Most happily with sweet content
In the rich home of Raghu's line,
And every earthly joy was mine.
Twelve pleasant years flew by, and then
His peers advised the king of men,
Ráma, my lord, to consecrate
Joint ruler of his ancient state.
But when the rites were scarce begun,
To consecrate Ikshváku's son,
The queen Kaikeyí, honoured dame,
Sought of her lord an ancient claim,
Her plea of former service pressed,
And made him grant her new request,
To banish Ráma to the wild
And consecrate instead her child.
This double prayer on him, the best

And truest king, she strongly pressed:
'Mine eyes in sleep I will not close,
Nor eat, nor drink, nor take repose.
This very day my death shall bring
If Ráma be anointed king.'
As thus she spake in envious ire,
The aged king, my husband's sire,
Besought with fitting words; but she
Was cold and deaf to every plea.
As yet my days are few; eighteen
The years of life that I have seen;
And Ráma, best of all alive,
Has passed of years a score and five—
Ráma the great and gentle, through
All regions famed as pure and true,
Large-eyed and mighty-armed and tall,
With tender heart that cares for all.
But Daśaratha, led astray
By woman's wile and passion's sway,
By his strong love of her impelled,
The consecrating rites withheld.
When, hopeful of the promised grace,
My Ráma sought his father's face,
The queen Kaikeyí, ill at ease,
Spoke to my lord brief words like these
'Hear, son of Raghu, hear from me
The words thy father says to thee:
"I yield this day to Bharat's hand,
Free from all foes, this ancient land.
Fly from this home no longer thine,
And dwell in woods five years and nine.
Live in the forest and maintain
Mine honour pure from falsehood's stain.'
Then Ráma spoke, untouched by dread:

'Yea, it shall be as thou hast said.'
And answered, faithful to his vows,
Obeying Daśaratha's spouse:
'The offered realm I would not take,
But still keep true the words he spake.'
Thus, gentle Bráhman, Ráma still
Clung to his vow with firmest will.
And valiant Lakshmaṇ, dear to fame,
His brother by a younger dame,
Bold victor in the deadly fray,
Would follow Ráma on his way.
On sternest vows his heart was set,
And he, a youthful anchoret,
Bound up in twisted coil his hair
And took the garb which hermits wear;
Then with his bow to guard us, he
Went forth with Ráma and with me.
By Queen Kaikeyí's art bereft
The kingdom and our home we left,
And bound by stern religious vows
We sought this shade of forest boughs.
Now, best of Bráhmans, here we tread
These pathless regions dark and dread.
But come, refresh thy soul, and rest
Here for a while an honoured guest.
For he, my lord, will soon be here
With fresh supply of woodland cheer,
Large store of venison of the buck,
Or some great boar his hand has struck.
Meanwhile, O stranger, grant my prayer:
Thy name, thy race, thy birth declare,
And why with no companion thou
Roamest in Daṇḍak forest now.'
Thus questioned Sítá, Ráma's dame.

Then fierce the stranger's answer came:
'Lord of the giant legions, he
From whom celestial armies flee,—
The dread of hell and earth and sky,
Rávaṇ the Rákshas king am I.
Now when thy gold-like form I view
Arrayed in silks of amber hue,
My love, O thou of perfect mould,
For all my dames is dead and cold.
A thousand fairest women, torn
From many a land my home adorn.
But come, O loveliest lady, be
The queen of every dame and me.
My city Lanká, glorious town,
Looks from a mountain's forehead down
Where ocean with his flash and foam
Beats madly on mine island home.
With me, O Sítá, shalt thou rove
Delighted through each shady grove,
Nor shall thy happy breast retain
Fond memory of this life of pain.
In gay attire, a glittering band,
Five thousand maids shall round thee stand,
And serve thee at thy beck and sign,
If thou, fair Sítá, wilt be mine.'

Then forth her noble passion broke
As thus in turn the lady spoke:
'Me, me the wife of Ráma, him
The lion lord with lion's limb,
Strong as the sea, firm as the rock,
Like Indra in the battle shock;
The lord of each auspicious sign,
The glory of his princely line,
Like some fair Lodh tree strong and tall,

The noblest and the best of all,
Ráma, the heir of happy fate
Who keeps his word inviolate,
Lord of the lion gait, possessed
Of mighty arm and ample chest,
Ráma the lion-warrior, him
Whose moon-bright face no fear can dim,
Ráma, his bridled passions' lord,
The darling whom his sire adored,—
Me, me the true and loving dame
Of Ráma, prince of deathless fame,—
Me wouldst thou vainly woo and press?
A jackal woo a lioness!
Steal from the sun his glory! such
Thy hope Lord Ráma's wife to touch.
Ha! thou hast seen the trees of gold,
The sign which dying eyes behold,
Thus seeking, weary of thy life,
To win the love of Ráma's wife.
Fool! wilt thou dare to rend away
The famished lion's bleeding prey,
Or from the threatening jaws to take
The fang of some envenomed snake?
What, wouldst thou shake with puny hand
Mount Mandar,[1] towering o'er the land,
Put poison to thy lips and think
The deadly cup a harmless drink?
With pointed needle touch thine eye,
A razor to thy tongue apply,
Who wouldst pollute with impious touch
The wife whom Ráma loves so much?
Be round thy neck a millstone tied,

[1] The mountain which was used by the Gods as a churning stick at the Churning of the Ocean.

And swim the sea from side to side;
Or raising both thy hands on high
Pluck sun and moon from yonder sky;
Or let the kindled flame be pressed,
Wrapt in thy garment, to thy breast;
More wild the thought that seeks to win
Ráma's dear wife who knows not sin.
The fool who thinks with idle aim
To gain the love of Ráma's dame,
With dark and desperate footing makes
His way o'er points of iron stakes.
As Ocean to a bubbling spring,
The lion to a fox, the king
Of all the birds that ply the wing
To an ignoble crow.
As gold to lead of little price,
As to the drainings of the rice
The drink they quaff in Paradise,
The Amrit's heavenly flow,
As sandal dust with perfume sweet
Is to the mire that soils our feet,
A tiger to a cat,
As the white swan is to the owl,
The peacock to the waterfowl,
An eagle to a bat,
Such is my lord compared with thee;
And when with bow and arrows he,
Mighty as Indra's self shall see
His foeman, armed to slay,
Thou, death-doomed like the fly that sips
The oil that on the altar drips,
Shalt cast the morsel from thy lips
And lose thy half-won prey.'
Thus in high scorn the lady flung

The biting arrows of her tongue
In bitter words that pierced and stung
The rover of the night.
She ceased. Her gentle cheek grew pale,
Her loosened limbs began to fail,
And like a plantain in the gale
She trembled with affright.
He terrible as Death stood nigh,
And watched with fierce exulting eye
The fear that shook her frame.
To terrify the lady more,
He counted all his triumphs o'er,
Proclaimed the titles that he bore,
His pedigree and name.

CANTO XLVIII.

RÁVAṆ'S SPEECH.

With knitted brow and furious eye
The stranger made his fierce reply :
'In me, O fairest dame, behold
The brother of the King of Gold.
Lord of Ten Necks my title, named
Rávaṇ, for might and valour famed.
Gods and Gandharva hosts I scare ;
Snakes, spirits, birds that roam the air
Fly from my coming, wild with fear,
Trembling like men when Death is near.
Vaiśravaṇ onçe, my brother, wrought
To ire, encountered me and fought,
But yielding to superior might
Fled from his home in sore affright.
Lord of the man-drawn chariot, still
He dwells on famed Kailása's hill.
I made the vanquished king resign
The glorious car which now is mine,—
Pushpak, the far-renowned, that flies
Will-guided through the buxom skies.
Celestial hosts by Indra led
Flee from my face disquieted,
And where my dreaded feet appear
The wind is hushed or breathes in fear.
Where'er I stand, where'er I go
The troubled waters cease to flow,
Each spell-bound wave is mute and still
And the fierce sun himself is chill.

Beyond the sea my Lankâ stands'
Filled with fierce forms and giant bands,
A glorious city fair to see
As Indra's Amarávatí.
A towering height of solid wall,
Flashing afar, surrounds it all.
Its golden courts enchant the sight,
And gates aglow with lazulite.
Steeds, elephants, and cars are there,
And drums' loud music fills the air.
Fair trees in lovely gardens grow
Whose boughs with varied fruitage glow.
Thou, beauteous Queen, with me shalt dwell
In halls that suit a princess well,
Thy former fellows shalt forget
Nor think of women with regret.
No earthly joy thy soul shall miss,
And take its fill of heavenly bliss.
Of mortal Ráma think no more,
Whose term of days will soon be o'er.
King Daśaratha looked in scorn
On Ráma though the eldest born,
Sent to the woods the weakling fool,
And set his darling son to rule.
What, O thou large-eyed dame, hast thou
To do with fallen Ráma now,
From home and kingdom forced to fly,
A wretched hermit soon to die?
Accept thy lover, nor refuse
The giant king who fondly woos.
O listen, nor reject in scorn
A heart by Káma's arrows torn.
If thou refuse to hear my prayer,
Of grief and coming woe beware;

For the sad fate will fall on thee
Which came on hapless Urvaśí,
When with her foot she chanced to touch
Purúravas, and sorrowed much.[1]
My little finger raised in fight
Were more than match for Ráma's might.
O fairest, blithe and happy be
With him whom fortune sends to thee."
Such were the words the giant said:
And Sítá's angry eyes were red.
She answered in that lonely place
The monarch of the giant race:
'Art thou the brother of the Lord
Of Gold by all the world adored,
And sprung of that illustrious seed
Wouldst now attempt this evil deed?
I tell thee, impious Monarch, all
The giants by thy sin will fall,
Whose reckless lord and king thou art,
With foolish mind and lawless heart.
Yea, one may hope to steal the wife
Of Indra and escape with life.
But he who Ráma's dame would tear
From his loved side must needs despair.
Yea, one may steal fair Śachí, dame
Of Him who shoots the thunder flame,
May live successful in his aim
And length of days may see;
But hope, O giant King, in vain,
Though cups of Amrit thou may drain,
To shun the penalty and pain
Of wronging one like me.'

[1] The story will be found in GARRETT'S *Classical Dictionary*. See ADDITIONAL NOTES.

CANTO XLIX.

THE RAPE OF SÍTA.

The Rákshas monarch, thus addressed,
His hands a while together pressed,
And straight before her startled eyes
Stood monstrous in his giant size.
Then to the lady, with the lore
Of eloquence, he spoke once more:
'Thou scarce,' he cried, 'hast heard aright
The glories of my power and might.
I borne sublime in air can stand
And with these arms upheave the land,
Drink the deep flood of Ocean dry
And Death with conquering force defy,
Pierce the great sun with furious dart
And to her depths cleave earth apart.
See, thou whom love and beauty blind,
I wear each form as wills my mind.'
As thus he spake in burning ire
His glowing eyes were red with fire.
His gentle garb aside was thrown
And all his native shape was shown.
Terrific, monstrous, wild, and dread
As the dark God who rules the dead,
His fiery eyes in fury rolled,
His limbs were decked with glittering gold.
Like some dark cloud the monster showed,
And his fierce breast with fury glowed.
The ten-faced rover of the night,

With twenty arms exposed to sight,
His saintly guise aside had laid
And all his giant height displayed.
Attired in robes of crimson dye
He stood and watched with angry eye
The lady in her bright array
Resplendent as the dawn of day
When from the east the sunbeams break,
And to the dark-haired lady spake:
'If thou would call that lord thine own
Whose fame in every world is known,
Look kindly on my love, and be
Bride of a consort meet for thee.
With me let blissful years be spent,
For ne'er thy choice shalt thou repent.
No deed of mine shall e'er displease
My darling as she lives at ease.
Thy love for mortal man resign,
And to a worthier lord incline.
Ah foolish lady, seeming wise
In thine own weak and partial eyes,
By what fair graces art thou held
To Ráma from his realm expelled?
Misfortunes all his life attend,
And his brief days are near their end.
Unworthy prince, infirm of mind!
A woman spoke, and he resigned
His home and kingdom and withdrew
From troops of friends and retinue,
And sought this forest dark and dread
By savage beasts inhabited.'
Thus Rávaṇ urged the lady meet
For love, whose words were soft and sweet.
Near and more near the giant pressed

As love's hot fire inflamed his breast.
The leader of the giant crew
His arm around the lady threw:
Thus Budha[1] with ill-omened might
Steals Rohiṇí's delicious light.
One hand her glorious tresses grasped,
One with its ruthless pressure clasped
The body of his lovely prize,
The Maithil dame with lotus eyes.
The silvan Gods in wild alarm
Marked his huge teeth and ponderous arm,
And from that Death-like presence fled,
Of mountain size and towering head.
Then seen was Rávaṇ's magic car
Aglow with gold which blazed afar,—
The mighty car which asses drew
Thundering as it onward flew.
He spared not harsh rebuke to chide
The lady as she moaned and cried,
Then with his arm about her waist
His captive in the car he placed.
In vain he threatened: long and shrill
Rang out her lamentation still,
O Ráma! which no fear could stay:
But her dear lord was far away.
Then rose the fiend, and toward the skies
Bore his poor helpless struggling prize:
Hurrying through the air above
The dame who loathed his proffered love.
So might a soaring eagle bear
A serpent's consort through the air.
As on he bore her through the sky
She shrieked aloud her bitter cry,

[1] Mercury: to be carefully distinguished from Buddha.

As when some wretch's lips complain
In agony of maddening pain:
'O Lakshman, thou whosé joy is still
To do thine elder brother's will,
This fiend, who all disguises wears,
From Ráma's side his darling tears.
Thou who couldst leave bliss, fortune, all,
Yea life itself at duty's call,
Dost thou not see this outrage done
To hapless me, O Raghu's son?
'Tis thine, O victor of the foe,
To bring the haughtiest spirit low,
How canst thou such an outrage see
And let the guilty fiend go free?
Ah, seldom in a moment's time
Comes bitter fruit of sin and crime,
But in the day of harvest pain
Comes like the ripening of the grain.
So thou whom fate and folly lead
To ruin for this guilty deed,
Shalt die by Ráma's arm ere long
A dreadful death for hideous wrong.
Ah, too successful in their ends
Are Queen Kaikeyí and her friends,
When virtuous Ráma, dear to fame,
Is mourning for his ravished dame.
Ah me, ah me! a long farewell
To lawn and glade and forest dell
In Janasthán's wild region, where
The Cassia trees are bright and fair!
With all your tongues to Ráma say
That Rávaṇ bears his wife away.
Farewell, a long farewell to thee,
O pleasant stream Godávarí,

Whose rippling waves are ever stirred
By many a glad wild water-bird!
All ye to Ráma's ear relate
The giant's deed and Sítá's fate.
O all ye Gods who love this ground
Where trees of every leaf abound,
Tell Ráma I am stolen hence,
I pray you all with reverence.
On all the living things beside
That these dark boughs and coverts hide,
Ye flocks of birds, ye troops of deer,
I call on you my prayer to hear.
All ye to Ráma's ear proclaim
That Rávaṇ tears away his dame
With forceful arms,—his darling wife,
Dearer to Ráma than his life.
O, if he knew I dwelt in hell,
My mighty lord, I know full well,
Would bring me, conqueror, back to-day,
Though Yama's self reclaimed his prey.'
Thus from the air the lady sent
With piteous voice her last lament,
And as she wept she chanced to see
The vulture on a lofty tree.
As Rávaṇ bore her swiftly by,
On the dear bird she bent her eye,
And with a voice which woe made faint
Renewed to him her wild complaint:
'O see, the king who rules the race
Of giants, cruel, fierce and base,
Rávaṇ the spoiler bears me hence
The helpless prey of violence.
This fiend who roves in midnight shade
By thee, dear bird, can ne'er be stayed,

For he is armed and fierce and strong.
Triumphant in the power to wrong.
For thee remains one only task,
To do, kind friend, the thing I ask.
To Ráma's ear by thee be borne
How Sítá from her home is torn,
And to the valiant Lakshman tell
The giant's deed and what befell.'

CANTO L.

JAṬÁYUS.

The vulture from his slumber woke
And heard the words which Sítá spoke.
He raised his eye and looked on her,
Looked on her giant ravisher.
That noblest bird with pointed beak,
Majestic as a mountain peak,
High on the tree addressed the king
Of giants, wisely counselling:
'O Ten-necked lord, I firmly hold
To faith and laws ordained of old,
And thou, my brother, shouldst refrain
From guilty deeds that shame and stain.
The vulture king supreme in air,
Jaṭáyus is the name I bear.
Thy captive, known by Sítá's name,
Is the dear consort and the dame
Of Ráma Daśaratha's heir
Who makes the good of all his care.
Lord of the world, in might he vies
With the great Gods of seas and skies.
The law he boasts to keep allows
No king to touch another's spouse,
And, more than all, a prince's dame
High honour and respect may claim.
Back to the earth thy way incline,
Nor think of one who is not thine.
Heroic souls should hold in shame

To stoop to deeds which others blame,
And all respect by them is shown
To dames of others as their own.
Not every case of bliss and gain
The Scripture's holy texts explain,
And subjects, when that light is dim,
Look to their prince and follow him.
The king is bliss and profit, he
Is store of treasures fair to see,
And all the people's fortunes spring,
Their joy and misery, from the king.
If, lord of giant race, thy mind
Be fickle, false, to sin inclined,
How wilt thou kingly place retain?
High thrones in heaven no sinners gain.
The soul which gentle passions sway
Ne'er throws its nobler part away,
Nor will the mansion of the base
Long be the good man's dwelling-place.
Prince Ráma, chief of high renown,
Has wronged thee not in field or town.
Ne'er has he sinned against thee: how
Canst thou resolve to harm him now?
If moved by Súrpaṇakhá's prayer
The giant Khara sought him there,
And fighting fell with baffled aim,
His and not Ráma's is the blame.
Say, mighty lord of giants, say
What fault on Ráma canst thou lay?
What has the world's great master done
That thou should steal his precious one?
Quick, quick the Maithil dame release;
Let Ráma's consort go in peace,
Lest scorched by his terrific eye

Beneath his wrath thou fall and die
Like Vritra when Lord Indra threw
The lightning flame that smote and slew.
Ah fool, with blinded eyes to take
Home to thy heart a venomed snake!
Ah foolish eyes, too blind to see
That Death's dire coils entangle thee!
The prudent man his strength will spare,
Nor lift a load too great to bear.
Content is he with wholesome food
Which gives him life and strength renewed.
But who would dare the guilty deed
That brings no fame or glorious meed,
Where merit there is none to win
And vengeance soon o'ertakes the sin?
My course of life, Pulastya's son,
For sixty thousand years has run.
Lord of my kind I still maintain
Mine old hereditary reign.
I, worn by years, am older far
Than thou, young lord of bow and car,
In coat of glittering mail encased
And armed with arrows at thy waist.
But not unchallenged shalt thou go,
Or steal the dame without a blow.
Thou canst not, King, before mine eyes
Bear off unchecked thy lovely prize,
Safe as the truth of Scripture bent
By no close logic's argument.
Stay if thy courage let thee, stay
And meet me in the battle fray,
And thou shalt stain the earth with gore
Falling as Khara fell before.
Soon Ráma, clothed in bark, shall smite

Thee, his proud foe, in deadly fight,—
Ráma, from whom have oft times fled
The Daitya hosts discomfited.
No power have I to kill or slay:
The princely youths are far away,
But soon shalt thou with fearful eye
Struck down beneath their arrows lie.
But while I yet have life and sense,
Thou shalt not, tyrant, carry hence
Fair Sítá, Ráma's honoured queen,
With lotus eyes and lovely mien.
Whate'er the pain, whate'er the cost,
Though in the struggle life be lost,
The will of Raghu's noblest son
And Daśaratha must be done.
Stay for a while, O Rávaṇ, stay,
One hour thy flying car delay,
And from that glorious chariot thou
Shalt fall like fruit from shaken bough,
For I to thee, while yet I live,
The welcome of a foe will give.'

CANTO LI.

THE COMBAT.

Rávaṇ's red eyes in fury rolled:
Bright with his armlets' flashing gold,
In high disdain, by passion stirred
He rushed against the sovereign bird.
With clash and din and furious blows
Of murderous battle met the foes:
Thus urged by winds two clouds on high
Meet warring in the stormy sky.
Then fierce the dreadful combat raged
As fiend and bird in war engaged,
As if two winged mountains sped
To dire encounter overhead.
Keen pointed arrows thick and fast,
In never ceasing fury cast,
Rained hurtling on the vulture king
And smote him on the breast and wing.
But still that noblest bird sustained
The cloud of shafts which Rávaṇ rained,
And with strong beak and talons bent
The body of his foeman rent.
Then wild with rage the ten-necked king
Laid ten swift arrows on his string,—
Dread as the staff of Death were they,
So terrible and keen to slay.
Straight to his ear the string he drew,
Straight to the mark the arrows flew,
And pierced by every iron head

The vulture's mangled body bled.
One glance upon the car he bent
Where Sítá wept with shrill lament,
Then heedless of his wounds and pain
Rushed at the giant king again.
Then the brave vulture with the stroke
Of his resistless talons broke
The giant's shafts and bow whereon
The fairest pearls and jewels shone.
The monster paused, by rage unmanned:
A second bow soon armed his hand,
Whence pointed arrows swift and true
In hundreds, yea in thousands, flew.
The monarch of the vultures, plied
With ceaseless darts on every side,
Showed like a bird that turns to rest
Close covered by the branch-built nest.
He shook his pinions to repel
The storm of arrows as it fell;
Then with his talons snapped in two
The mighty bow which Rávaṇ drew.
Next with terrific wing he smote
So fiercely on the giant's coat,
The harness, glittering with the glow
Of fire, gave way beneath the blow.
With storm of murderous strokes he beat
The harnessed asses strong and fleet,—
Each with a goblin's monstrous face
And plates of gold his neck to grace.
Then on the car he turned his ire,—
The will-moved car that shone like fire,
And broke the glorious chariot, broke
The golden steps and pole and yoke.
The chouris and the silken shade

Like the full moon to view displayed,
Together with the guards who held
Those emblems, to the ground he felled.
The royal vulture hovered o'er
The driver's head, and pierced and tore
With his strong beak and dreaded claws
His mangled brow and cheek and jaws.
With broken car and sundered bow,
His charioteer and team laid low,
One arm about the lady wound,
Sprang the fierce giant to the ground.
Spectators of the combat, all
The spirits viewed the monster's fall:
Lauding the vulture every one
Cried with glad voice, Well done! well done!
But weak with length of days, at last
The vulture's strength was failing fast.
The fiend again assayed to bear
The lady through the fields of air.
But when the vulture saw him rise
Triumphant with his trembling prize,
Bearing the sword that still was left
When other arms were lost or cleft,
Once more, impatient of reposo,
Swift from the earth her champion rose,
Hung in the way, the fiend would take,
And thus addressing Rávaṇ spake:
'Thou, King of giants, rash and blind,
Wilt be the ruin of thy kind,
Stealing the wife of Ráma, him
With lightning scars on chest and limb.
A mighty host obeys his will
And troops of slaves his palace fill;
His lords of state are wise and true,

Kinsmen has he and retinue.
As thirsty travellers drain the cup,
Thou drinkest deadly poison up.
The rash and careless fool who heeds
No coming fruit of guilty deeds,
A few short years of life shall see,
And perish doomed to death like thee.
Say whither wilt thou fly to loose
Thy neck from Death's entangling noose,
Caught like the fish that finds too late
The hook beneath the treacherous bait?
Never, O King—of this be sure—
Will Raghu's fiery sons endure,
Terrific in their vengeful rage,
This insult to their hermitage.
Thy guilty hands this day have done
A deed which all reprove and shun,
Unworthy of a noble chief,
The pillage loved by coward thief.
Stay, if thy heart allow thee, stay
And meet me in the deadly fray.
Soon shalt thou stain the earth with gore,
And fall as Khara fell before.
The fruits of former deeds o'erpower
The sinner in his dying hour;
And such a fate on thee, O King,
Thy tyranny and madness bring.
Not e'en the Self-existent Lord,
Who reigns by all the worlds adored,
Would dare attempt a guilty deed
Which the dire fruits of crime succeed.'

Thus brave Jaṭáyus, best of birds,
Addresssd the fiend with moving words,
Then ready for the swift attack

Swooped down upon the giant's back.
Down to the bone the talons went:
With many a wound the flesh was rent:
Such blows infuriate drivers deal
Their elephants with pointed steel.
Fixed in his back the strong beak lay,
The talons stripped the flesh away.
He fought with claws and beak and wing,
And tore the long hair of the king.
Still as the royal vulture beat
The giant with his wings and feet,
Swelled the fiend's lips, his body shook
With furious rage too great to brook.
About the Maithil dame he cast
One huge left arm and held her fast.
In furious rage to frenzy fanned
He struck the vulture with his hand.
Jaṭáyus mocked the vain assay,
And rent his ten left arms away.
Down dropped the severed limbs: anew
Ten others from his body grew:
Thus bright with pearly radiance glide
Dread serpents from the hillock side.
Again in wrath the giant pressed
The lady closer to his breast,
And foot and fist sent blow on blow
In ceaseless fury at the foe.
So fierce and dire the battle, waged
Between those mighty champions, raged;
Here was the lord of giants, there
The noblest of the birds of air.
Thus, as his love of Ráma taught,
The faithful vulture strove and fought.
But Rávaṇ seized his sword and smote

His wings and side and feet and throat.
At mangled side and wing he bled;
He fell, and life was almost fled.
The lady saw her champion lie,
His plumes distained with gory dye,
And hastened to the vulture's side
Grieving as though a kinsman died.
The lord of Lanká's island viewed
The vulture as he lay:
Whose back like some dark cloud was hued,
His breast a paly grey,
Like ashes, when by none renewed,
The flame has died away.
The lady saw with mournful eye
Her champion press the plain,—
The royal bird, her true ally
Whom Rávaṇ's might had slain.
Her soft arms locked in strict embrace
Around his neck she kept,
And lovely with her moon-bright face
Bent o'er her friend and wept.

CANTO LII.

RAVAṆ'S FLIGHT.

Fair as the lord of silvery rays
Whom every star in heaven obeys,
The Maithil dame her plaint renewed
O'er him by Rávaṇ's might subdued:
'Dreams, omens, auguries foreshow
Our coming lot of weal and woe:
But thou, my Ráma, couldst not see
The grievous blow which falls on thee.
The birds and deer desert the brakes
And show the path my captor takes,
And thus e'en now this royal bird
Flew to mine aid by pity stirred.
Slain for my sake in death he lies,
The broad-winged rover of the skies.
O Ráma, haste, thine aid I crave:
O Lakshmaṇ, why delay to save?
Brave sons of old Ikshváku, hear
And rescue in this hour of fear.'
Her flowery wreath was torn and rent,
Crushed was each sparkling ornament.
She with weak arms and trembling knees
Clung like a creeper to the trees,
And like some poor deserted thing
With wild shrieks made the forest ring.
But swift the giant reached her side,
As loud on Ráma's name she cried.
Fierce as grim Death one hand he laid

Upon her tresses' lovely braid.
That touch, thou impious King, shall be
The ruin of thy race and thee.
The universal world in awe
That outrage on the lady saw.
All nature shook convulsed with dread,
And darkness o'er the land was spread.
The Lord of Day grew dark and chill,
And every breath of air was still.
The Eternal Father of the sky
Beheld the crime with heavenly eye,
And spake with solemn voice, 'The deed,
The deed is done, of old decreed.'
Sad were the saints within the grove,
But triumph with their sorrow strove.
They wept to see the Maithil dame
Endure the outrage, scorn, and shame:
They joyed because his life should pay
The penalty incurred that day.
Then Rávaṇ raised her up, and bare
His captive through the fields of air,
Calling with accents loud and shrill
On Ráma and on Lakshmaṇ still.
With sparkling gems on arm and breast,
In silk of paly amber dressed,
High in the air the Maithil dame
Gleamed like the lightning's flashing flame.
The giant, as the breezes blew
Upon her robes of amber hue,
And round him twined that gay attire,
Showed like a mountain girt with fire.
The lady, fairest of the fair,
Had wreathed a garland round her hair;
Its lotus petals bright and sweet

Rained down about the giant's feet.
Her vesture, bright as burning gold,
Gave to the wind each glittering fold,
Fair as a gilded cloud that gleams
Touched by the Day-God's tempered beams.
Yet struggling in the fiend's embrace,
The lady with her sweet pure face,
Far from her lord, no longer wore
The light of joy that shone before.
Like some sad lily by the side
Of waters which the sun has dried;
Like the pale moon uprising through
An autumn cloud of darkest hue,
So was her perfect face between
The arms of giant Rávaṇ seen:
Fair with the charm of braided tress
And forehead's finished loveliness;
Fair with the ivory teeth that shed
White lustre through the lips' fine red,
Fair as the lotus when the bud
Is rising from the parent flood.
With faultless lip and nose and eye,
Dear as the moon that floods the sky
With gentle light, of perfect mould,
She seemed a thing of burnished gold,
Though on her cheek the traces lay
Of tears her hand had brushed away.
But as the moon-beams swiftly fade
Ere the great Day-God shines displayed,
So in that form of perfect grace
Still trembling in the fiend's embrace,
From her beloved Ráma reft,
No light of pride or joy was left.
The lady with her golden hue

O'er the swart fiend a lustre threw,
As when embroidered girths enfold
An elephant with gleams of gold.
Fair as the lily's bending stem,—
Her arms adorned with many a gem,
A lustre to the fiend she lent
Gleaming from every ornament,
As when the cloud-shot flashes light
The shadows of a mountain height.
Whene'er the breezes earthward bore
The tinkling of the zone she wore,
He seemed a cloud of darksome hue
Sending forth murmurs as it flew.
As on her way the dame was sped
From her sweet neck fair flowers were shed.
The swift wind caught the flowery rain
And poured it o'er the fiend again.
The wind-stirred blossoms, sweet to smell,
On the dark brows of Rávaṇ fell,
Like lunar constellations set
On Meru for a coronet.
From her small foot an anklet fair
With jewels slipped, and through the air,
Like a bright circlet of the flame
Of thunder, to the valley came.
The Maithil lady, fair to see
As the young leaflet of a tree
Clad in the tender hues of spring,
Flashed glory on the giant king,
As when a gold-embroidered zone
Around an elephant is thrown.
While, bearing far the lady, through
The realms of sky the giant flew,
She like a gleaming meteor cast

A glory round her as she passed.
Then from each limb in swift descent
Dropped many a sparkling ornament:
On earth they rested dim and pale
Like fallen stars when virtues fail.[1]
Around her neck a garland lay
Bright as the Star-God's silvery ray:
It fell and flashed like Gangá sent
From heaven above the firmament.[2]
The birds of every wing had flocked
To stately trees by breezes rocked:
These bowed their wind-swept heads and said:
'My lady sweet, be comforted.'
With faded blooms each brook within
Whose waters moved no gleamy fin,
Stole sadly through the forest dell
Mourning the dame it loved so well.
From every woodland region near
Came lions, tigers, birds, and deer,
And followed, each with furious look,
The way her flying shadow took.
For Sítá's loss each lofty hill,
Whose tears were waterfall and rill,
Lifting on high each arm-like steep,
Seemed in the general woe to weep.
When the great sun, the lord of day,
Saw Rávaṇ tear the dame away,
His glorious light began to fail
And all his disk grew cold and pale.
'If Rávaṇ from the forest flies

[1] The spirits of the good dwell in heaven until their store of accumulated merit is exhausted. Then they redescend to earth in the form of falling stars.

[2] See The Descent of Gangá, Book I. Canto XLIV.

With Ráma's Sítá as his prize,
Justice and truth have vanished hence,
Honour and right and innocence:'
Thus rose the cry of wild despair
From spirits as they gathered there.
In trembling troops in open lawns
Wept, wild with woe, the startled fawns,
And a strange terror changed the eyes
They lifted to the distant skies.
On silvan Gods who love the dell
A sudden fear and trembling fell,
As in the deepest woe they viewed
The lady by the fiend subdued.
Still in loud shrieks was heard afar
That voice whose sweetness naught could mar,
While eager looks of fear and woe
She bent upon the earth below.
The lady of each winning wile
With pearly teeth and lovely smile,
Seized by the lord of Lanká's isle,
Looked down for friends in vain.
She saw no friend to aid her, none,
Not Ráma nor the younger son
Of Daśaratha, and undone
She swooned with fear and pain.

CANTO LIII.

SÍTÁ'S THREATS.

Soon as the Maithil lady knew
That high through air the giant flew,
Distressed with grief and sore afraid
Her troubled spirit sank dismayed.
Then, as anew the waters welled
From those red eyes which sorrow swelled,
Forth in keen words her passion broke,
And to the fierce-eyed fiend she spoke:
'Canst thou attempt a deed so base,
Untroubled by the deep disgrace,—
To steal me from my home and fly,
When friend or guardian none was nigh?
Thy craven soul that longed to steal,
Fearing the blows that warriors deal,
Upon a magic deer relied
To lure my husband from my side.
Friend of his sire, the vulture-king
Lies low on earth with mangled wing,
Who gave his aged life for me
And died for her he sought to free.
Ah, glorious strength indeed is thine,
Thou meanest of thy giant line,
Whose courage dared to tell thy name
And conquer in the fight a dame.
Does the vile deed that thou hast done
Cause thee no shame, thou wicked one—
A woman from her home to rend

When none was near his aid to lend?
Through all the worlds, O giant King,
The tidings of this deed will ring,
This deed in law and honour's spite
By one who claims a hero's might.
Shame on thy boasted valour, shame!
Thy prowess is an empty name.
Shame, giant, on this cursed deed
For which thy race is doomed to bleed!
Thou fliest swifter than the gale,
For what can strength like thine avail?
Stay for one hour, O Ravaṇ, stay;
Thou shalt not flee with life away.
Soon as the royal chieftains' sight
Falls on the thief who roams by night,
Thou wilt not, tyrant, live one hour
Though backed by all thy legions' power.
Ne'er can thy puny strength sustain
The tempest of their arrowy rain:
Have e'er the trembling birds withstood
The wild flames raging in the wood?
Hear me, O Rávaṇ, let me go,
And save thy soul from coming woe.
Or if thou wilt not set me free,
Wroth for this insult done to me,
With his brave brother's aid my lord
Against thy life will raise his sword.
A guilty hope inflames thy breast
His wife from Ráma's home to wrest.
Ah fool, the hope thou hast is vain;
Thy dreams of bliss shall end in pain.
If torn from all I love by thee
My godlike lord no more I see,
Soon will I die and end my woes,

Nor live the captive of my foes.
Ah fool, with blinded eyes to choose
The evil and the good refuse!
So the sick wretch with stubborn will
Turns fondly to the cates that kill,
And madly draws his lips away
From medicine that would check decay.
About thy neck securely wound
The deadly coil of Fate is bound,
And thou, O Rávaṇ, dost not fear
Although the hour of death is near.
With death-doomed sight thine eyes behold
The gleaming of the trees of gold,—
See dread Vaitaraṇi, the flood
That rolls a stream of foamy blood,—
See the dark wood by all abhorred—
Its every leaf a threatening sword.
The tangled thickets thou shalt tread
Where thorns with iron points are spread.
For never can thy days be long,
Base plotter of this shame and wrong
To Ráma of the lofty soul:
He dies who drinks the poisoned bowl.
The coils of death around thee lie:
They hold thee and thou canst not fly.
Ah whither, tyrant, wouldst thou run
The vengeance of my lord to shun?
By his unaided arm alone
Were twice seven thousand fiends o'erthrown:
Yes, in the twinkling of an eye
He forced thy mightiest fiends to die.
And shall that lord of lion heart,
Skilled in the bow and spear and dart,
Spare thee, O fiend, in battle strife,

The robber of his darling wife?'
These were her words, and more beside,
By wrath and bitter hate supplied.
Then by her woe and fear o'erthrown
She wept again and made her moan.
As long she wept in grief and dread,
Scarce conscious of the words she said,
The wicked giant onward fled
And bore her through the air.
As firm he held the Maithil dame,
Still wildly struggling, o'er her frame
With grief and bitter misery came
The trembling of despair.

CANTO LIV.

LANKÁ.

He bore her on in rapid flight,
And not a friend appeared in sight.
But on a hill that o'er the wood
Raised its high top five monkeys stood.
From her fair neck her scarf she drew,
And down the glittering vesture flew,
With earring, necklet, chain, and gem,
Descending in the midst of them :
'For these,' she thought, 'my path may show,
And tell my lord the way I go.'
Nor did the fiend, in wild alarm,
Mark when she drew from neck and arm
And foot the gems and gold, and sent
To earth each gleaming ornament.
The monkeys raised their tawny eyes
That closed not in their first surprise,
And saw the dark-eyed lady, where
She shrieked above them in the air.
High o'er their heads the giant passed
Holding the weeping lady fast.
O'er Pampá's flashing flood he sped
And on to Lanká's city fled.
He bore away in senseless joy
The prize that should his life destroy,
Like the rash fool who hugs beneath
His robe a snake with venomed teeth.
Swift as an arrow from a bow,

Speeding o'er lands that lay below,
Sublime in air his course he took
O'er wood and rock and lake and brook.
He passed at length the sounding sea
Where monstrous creatures wander free,—
Seat of Lord Varuṇ's ancient reign,
Controller of the eternal main.
The angry waves were raised and tossed
As Rávaṇ with the lady crossed,
And fish and snake in wild unrest
Showed flashing fin and gleaming crest.
Then from the blessed troops who dwell
In air celestial voices fell:
'O ten-necked King,' they cried, 'attend:
This guilty deed will bring thine end.'
Then Rávaṇ speeding like the storm,
Bearing his death in human form,
The struggling Sítá, lighted down
In royal Lanká's glorious town;
A city bright and rich, that showed
Well-ordered street and noble road;
Arranged with just division, fair
With multitudes in court and square.
Thus, all his journey done, he passed
Within his royal home at last.
There in a queenly bower he placed
The black-eyed dame with dainty waist:
Thus in her chamber Maya laid
The lovely Máyá, demon maid.
Then Rávaṇ gave command to all
The dread she-fiends who filled the hall:
'This captive lady watch and guard
From sight of man and woman barred.
But all the fair one asks beside

Be with unsparing hand supplied:
As though 'twere I that asked, withhold
No pearls or dress or gems or gold.
And she among you that shall dare
Of purpose or through want of care
One word to vex her soul to say,
Throws her unvalued life away.'
Thus spake the monarch of their race
To those she-fiends who thronged the place,
And pondering on the course to take
Went from the chamber as he spake.
He saw eight giants, strong and dread,
On flesh of bleeding victims fed,
Proud in the boon which Brahmá gave,
And trusting in its power to save.
He thus the mighty chiefs addressed
Of glorious power and strength possessed:
'Arm, warriors, with the spear and bow;
With all your speed from Lanká go,
For Janasthán, our own no more,
Is now defiled with giants' gore;
The seat of Khara's royal state
Is left unto us desolate.
In your brave hearts and might confide,
And cast ignoble fear aside.
Go, in that desert region dwell
Where the fierce giants fought and fell.
A glorious host that region held,
For power and might unparalleled,
By Dúshaṇ and brave Khara led,—
All, slain by Ráma's arrows, bled.
Hence boundless wrath that spurns control
Reigns paramount within my soul,
And naught but Ráma's death can sate

The fury of my vengeful hate.
I will not close my slumbering eyes
Till by this hand my foeman dies.
And when mine arm has slain the foe
Who laid those giant princes low,
Long will I triumph in the deed,
Like one enriched in utmost need.
Now go; that I this end may gain,
In Janasthán, O chiefs, remain.
Watch Ráma there with keenest eye,
And all his deeds and movements spy.
Go forth, no helping art neglect,
Be brave and prompt and circumspect,
And be your one endeavour still
To aid mine arm this foe to kill.
Oft have I seen your warrior might
Proved in the forehead of the fight,
And sure of strength I know so well
Send you in Janasthán to dwell.'

The giants heard with prompt assent
The pleasant words he said,
And each before his master bent
For meet salúte, his head.
Then as he bade, without delay,
From Lanká's gate they passed,
And hurried forward on their way
Invisible and fast.

CANTO LV.

SÍTÁ IN PRISON.

Thus Rávaṇ his commandment gave
To those eight giants strong and brave,
So thinking in his foolish pride
Against all dangers to provide.
Then with his wounded heart aflame
With love he thought upon the dame,
And took with hasty steps the way
To the fair chamber where she lay.
He saw the gentle lady there
Weighed down by woe too great to bea
Amid the throng of fiends who kept
Their watch around her as she wept:
A pinnace sinking neath the wave
When mighty winds around her rave:
A lonely herd-forsaken deer,
When hungry dogs are pressing near.
Within the bower the giant passed:
Her mournful looks were downward cast.
As there she lay with streaming eyes
The giant bade the lady rise,
And to the shrinking captive showed
The glories of his rich abode,
Where thousand women spent their days
In palaces with gold ablaze;
Where wandered birds of every sort,
And jewels flashed in hall and court,
Where noble pillars charmed the sight

With diamond and lazulite,
And others glorious to behold
With ivory, crystal, silver, gold.
There swelled on high the tambour's sound,
And burnished ore was bright around.
He led the mournful lady where
Resplendent gold adorned the stair,
And showed each lattice fair to see
With silver work and ivory:
Showed his bright chambers, line on line,
Adorned with nets of golden twine.
Beyond he showed the Maithil dame
His gardens bright as lightning's flame,
And many a pool and lake he showed
Where blooms of gayest colour glowed.
Through all his home from view to view
The lady sunk in grief he drew.
Then trusting in her heart to wake
Desire of all she saw, he spake:
'Three hundred million giants, all
Obedient to their master's call,
Not counting young and weak and old,
Serve me with spirits fierce and bold.
A thousand culled from all of these
Wait on the lord they long to please.
This glorious power, this pomp and sway,
Dear lady, at thy feet I lay:
Yea, with my life I give the whole,
O dearer than my life and soul.
A thousand beauties fill my hall:
Be thou my wife and rule them all.
O hear my supplication! why
This reasonable prayer deny?
Some pity to thy suitor show,

For love's hot flames within me glow.
This isle a hundred leagues in length,
Encompassed by the ocean's strength,
Would all the Gods and fiends defy
Though led by Him who rules the sky.
No God in heaven, no sage on earth,
No minstrel of celestial birth,
No spirit in the worlds I see
A match in power and might for me.
What wilt thou do with Ráma, him
Whose days are short, whose light is dim,
Expelled from home and royal sway,
Who treads on foot his weary way?
Leave the poor mortal to his fate,
And wed thee with a worthier mate.
My timid love, enjoy with me
The prime of youth before it flee.
Do not one hour the hope retain
To look on Ráma's face again.
For whom would wildest thought beguile
To seek thee in the giants' isle?
Say who is he has power to bind
In toils of net the rushing wind.
Whose is the mighty hand will tame
And hold the glory of the flame?
In all the worlds above, below,
Not one, O fair of form, I know
Who from this isle in fight could rend
The lady whom these arms defend.
Fair Queen, o'er Lanká's island reign,
Sole mistress of the wide domain.
Gods, rovers of the night like me,
And all the world thy slaves will be.
O'er thy fair brows and queenly head

Let consecrating balm be shed,
And sorrow banished from thy breast,
Enjoy my love and take thy rest.
Here never more thy soul shall know
The memory of thy former woe,
And here shalt thou enjoy the meed
Deserved by every virtuous deed.
Here garlands glow of flowery twine,
With gorgeous hues and scent divine.
Take gold and gems and rich attire:
Enjoy with me thy heart's desire.
There stands, of chariots far the best,
The car my brother once possessed,
Which, victor in the stricken field,
I forced the Lord of Gold to yield.
'Tis wide and high and nobly wrought,
Bright as the sun and swift as thought.
Therein, O Sítá, shalt thou ride
Delighted by thy lover's side.
But sorrow mars with lingering trace
The splendour of thy lotus face.
A cloud of woe is o'er it spread,
And all the light of joy is fled.'

The lady, by her woe distressed,
One corner of her raiment pressed
To her sad cheek like moonlight clear,
And wiped away a falling tear.
The rover of the night renewed
His eager pleading as he viewed
The lady stand like one distraught,
Striving to fix her wandering thought:

'Think not, sweet lady, of the shame
Of broken vows, nor fear the blame.
The saints approve with favouring eyes

This union knit with marriage ties.
O beauty, at thy radiant feet
I lay my heads, and thus entreat.
One word of grace, one look I crave :
Have pity on thy prostrate slave.
These idle words I speak are vain,
Wrung forth by love's consuming pain,
And ne'er of Rávaṇ be it said
He wooed a dame with prostrate head.'
Thus to the Maithil lady sued
The monarch of the giant brood,
And 'She is now mine own,' he thought,
In Death's dire coils already caught.

CANTO LVI.

SÍTÁ'S DISDAIN.

His words the Maithil lady heard
Oppressed by woe but undeterred.
Fear of the fiend she cast aside,
And thus in noble scorn replied:
'His word of honour never stained,
King Daśaratha nobly reigned,
The bridge of right, the friend of truth.
His eldest son, a noble youth,
Is Ráma, virtue's faithful friend,
Whose glories through the worlds extend.
Long arms and large full eyes has he,
My husband, yea a God to me.
With shoulders like the forest king's,
From old Ikshváku's line he springs.
He with his brother Lakshman's aid
Will smite thee with the vengeful blade.
Hadst thou but dared before his eyes
To lay thine hand upon the prize,
Thou stretched before his feet hadst lain
In Janasthán like Khara slain.
Thy boasted rovers of the night
With hideous shapes and giant might,—
Like serpents when the feathered king
Swoops down with his tremendous wing,—
Will find their useless venom fail
When Ráma's mighty arms assail.
The rapid arrows bright with gold,

Shot from the bow he loves to hold,
Will rend thy frame from flank to flank
As Gangá's waves erode the bank.
Though neither God nor fiend have power
To slay thee in the battle hour,
Yet from his hand shall come thy fate,
Struck down before his vengeful hate.
That mighty lord will strike and end
The days of life thou hast to spend.
Thy days are doomed, thy life is sped
Like victim's to the pillar led.
Yea, if the glance of Ráma bright
With fury on thy form should light,
Thou scorched this day wouldst fall and die
Like Káma slain by Rudra's eye.[1]
He who from heaven the moon could throw,
Or bid its bright rays cease to glow,—
He who could drain the mighty sea
Will set his darling Sítá free.
Fled is thy life, thy glory, fled
Thy strength and power: each sense is dead.
Soon Lanká widowed by thy guilt
Will see the blood of giants spilt.
This wicked deed, O cruel King,
No triumph, no delight will bring.
Thou with outrageous might and scorn
A woman from her lord hast torn.
My glorious husband far away,
Making heroic strength his stay,
Dwells with his brother, void of fear,
In Daṇḍak forest lone and drear.
No more in force of arms confide:
That haughty strength, that power and pride

[1] See Book I, Canto XXV.

My hero with his arrowy rain
From all thy bleeding limbs will drain.
When urged by Fate's dire mandate, nigh
Comes the fixt hour for men to die,
Caught in Death's toils their eyes are blind,
And folly takes each wandering mind.
So for the outrage thou hast done
The fate is near thou canst not shun,—
The fate that on thyself and all
Thy giants and thy town shall fall.
I spurn thee: can the altar dight
With vessels for the sacred rite,
O'er which the priest his prayer has said,
Be sullied by an outcaste's tread?
So me, the consort dear and true
Of him who clings to virtue too,
Thy hated touch shall ne'er defile,
Base tyrant lord of Lankâ's isle.
Can the white swan who floats in pride
Through lilies by her consort's side,
Look for one moment, as they pass,
On the poor diver in the grass?
This senseless body waits thy will,
To torture, chain, to wound or kill.
I will not, King of giants, strive
To keep this fleeting soul alive.
But never shall they join the name
Of Sítá with reproach and shame.'
Thus as her breast with fury burned
Her bitter speech the dame returned.
Such words of rage and scorn, the last
She uttered, at the fiend she cast.
Her taunting speech the giant heard,
And every hair with anger stirred;

Then thus with fury in his eye
He made in threats his fierce reply:
'Hear Maithil lady, hear my speech;
List to my words and ponder each.
If o'er thy head twelve months shall fly
And thou thy love wilt still deny,
My cooks shall mince thy flesh with steel
And serve it for my morning meal.'
Thus with terrific threats to her
Spake Rávaṇ, cruel ravener.
Mad with the rage her answer woke
He called the fiendish train and spoke:
'Take her, ye Rákshas dames, who fright
With hideous form and mien the sight,
Who make the flesh of men your food,—
And let her pride be soon subdued.'
He spoke, and at his word the band
Of fiendish monsters raised each hand
In reverence to the giant king,
And pressed round Sítá in a ring.
Rávaṇ once more with stern behest
To those she-fiends his speech addressed:
Shaking the earth beneath his tread,
He stamped his furious foot and said:
'To the Aśoka garden bear
The dame, and guard her safely there
Until her stubborn pride be bent
By mingled threat and blandishment.
See that ye watch her well, and tame,
Like some she-elephant, the dame.'
They led her to that garden where
The sweetest flowers perfumed the air,
Where bright trees bore each rarest fruit,
And birds, enamoured, ne'er were mute.

Bowed down with terror and distress,
Watched by each cruel giantess,—
Like a poor solitary deer
When ravening tigresses are near,—
The hapless lady lay distraught
Like some wild thing but newly caught,
And found no solace, no relief
From agonizing fear and grief;
Not for one moment could forget
Each terrifying word and threat,
Or the fierce eyes upon her set
By those who watched around.
She thought of Ráma far away,
She mourned for Lakshmaṇ as she lay
In grief and terror and dismay
Half fainting on the ground.

CANTO LVII.

SÍTÁ COMFORTED.

Soon as the fiend had set her down
Within his home in Lanká's town
Triumph and joy filled Indra's breast,
Whom thus the Eternal Sire addressed:
'This deed will free the worlds from woe
And cause the giants' overthrow.
The fiend has borne to Lanká's isle
The lady of the lovely smile,
True consort, born to happy fate,
Well nurtured, fair and delicate.
She looks and longs for Ráma's face,
But sees a crowd of demon race,
And guarded by the giant's train
Pines for her lord and weeps in vain.
But Lanká founded on a steep
Is girdled by the mighty deep,
And how will Ráma know his fair
And blameless wife is prisoned there?
She on her woe will sadly brood
And pine away in solitude,
And heedless of herself will cease
To live, despairing of release.
Yes, pondering on her fate, I see
Her gentle life in jeopardy.
Go, Indra, swiftly seek the place,
And look upon her lovely face.
Within the city make thy way:

Let heavenly food her spirit stay.'
Thus Brahmá spake : and He who slew
The cruel demon Páka, flew
Where Lanká's royal city lay,
And Sleep went with him on his way.
'Sleep,' cried the heavenly Monarch, 'close
Each giant's eye in deep repose.'
Thus Indra spoke, and Sleep fulfilled
With joy his mandate as he willed.
To aid the plan the Gods proposed,
The demons' eyes in sleep she closed.
Then Śachí's lord, the Thousand-eyed,
To the Aśoka garden hied.
He came and stood where Sítá lay,
And gently thus began to say :
'Lord of the Gods who hold the sky,
Dame of the lovely smile, am I.
Weep no more, lady, weep no more ;
Thy days of woe will soon be o'er.
I come, O Janak's child, to be
The helper of thy lord and thee.
He through my grace, with hosts to aid,
This sea-girt land will soon invade.
'Tis by my art that slumbers close
The eyelids of thy giant foes.
Now I, with Sleep, this place have sought,
Videhan lady, and have brought
A gift of heaven's ambrosial food
To stay thee in thy solitude.
Receive it from my hand, and taste,
O lady of the dainty waist :
For countless ages thou shalt be
From pangs of thirst and hunger free.'
But doubt within her bosom woke

As to the Lord of Gods she spoke:
'How may I know for truth that thou
Whose form I see before me now
Art verily the King adored
By heavenly Gods, and Śachí's lord?
With Raghu's sons I learnt to know
The certain signs which Godhead show.
These marks before mine eyes display
If o'er the Gods thou bear the sway.'
The heavenly lord of Śachí heard,
And did according to her word.
Above the ground his feet were raised;
With eyelids motionless he gazed.
No dust upon his raiment lay,
And his bright wreath was fresh and gay.
Nor was the lady's glad heart slow
The Monarch of the Gods to know,
And while the tears unceasing ran
From her sweet eyes she thus began:
'My lord has gained a friend in thee,
And I this day thy presence see
Shown clearly to mine eyes, as when
Ráma and Lakshmaṇ, lords of men,
Beheld it, and their sire the king,
And Janak too from whom I spring.
Now I, O Monarch of the Blest,
Will eat this food at thy behest,
Which thou hast brought me, of thy grace,
To aid and strengthen Raghu's race.'
She spoke, and by his words relieved,
The food from Indra's hand received.
Yet ére she ate the balm he brought,
On Lakshmaṇ and her lord she thought.
'If my brave lord be still alive,

If valiant Lakshman yet survive,
May this my taste of heavenly food
Bring health to them and bliss renewed!'
She ate, and that celestial food
Stayed hunger, thirst, and lassitude,
And all her strength restored.
Great joy her hopeful spirit stirred
At the glad tidings newly heard
Of Lakshman and her lord.
And Indra's heart was joyful too:
He bade the Maithil dame adieu,
His saving errand done.
With Sleep beside him parting thence
He sought his heavenly residence
To prosper Raghu's son.

CANTO LVIII.

THE BROTHERS' MEETING.

When Ráma's deadly shaft had struck
The giant in the seeming buck,
The chieftain turned him from the place
His homeward way again to trace.
Then as he hastened onward, fain
To look upon his spouse again,
Behind him from a thicket nigh
Rang out a jackal's piercing cry.
Alarmed he heard the startling shriek
That raised his hair and dimmed his cheek,
And all his heart was filled with doubt
As the shrill jackal's cry rang out:
'Alas, some dire disaster seems
Portended by the jackal's screams.
O may the Maithil dame be screened
From outrage of each hungry fiend!
Alas, if Lakshmaṇ chanced to hear
That bitter cry of woe and fear
What time Márícha, as he died,
With voice that mocked my accents cried,
Swift to my side the prince would flee
And quit the dame to succour me.
Too well I see the demon band
The slaughter of my love have planned.
Me far from home and Sítá's view
The seeming deer Márícha drew.
He led me far through brake and dell

Till wounded by my shaft he fell,
And as he sank rang out his cry,
'O save me, Lakshmaṇ, or I die.'
May it be well with both who stayed
In the great wood with none to aid,
For every fiend is now my foe
For Janasthán's great overthrow,
And many an omen seen to-day
Has filled my heart with sore dismay.'

Such were the thoughts and sad surmise
Of Ráma at the jackal's cries,
And all his heart within him burned
As to his cot his steps he turned.
He pondered on the deer that led
His feet to follow where it fled,
And sad with many a bitter thought
His home in Janasthán he sought.
His soul was dark with woe and fear
When flocks of birds and troops of deer
Moved round him from the left, and raised
Discordant voices as they gazed.
The omens which the chieftain viewed
The terror of his soul renewed,
When lo, to meet him Lakshmaṇ sped
With brows whence all the light had fled.
Near and more near the princes came,
Each brother's heart and look the same;
Alike on each sad visage lay
The signs of misery and dismay.
Then Ráma by his terror moved
His brother for his fault reproved
In leaving Sítá far from aid
In the wild wood where giants strayed.
Lakshmaṇ's left hand he took, and then

In gentle tones the prince of men,
Though sharp and fierce their tenour ran,
Thus to his brother chief began :
'O Lakshman, thou art much to blame
Leaving alone the Maithil dame,
And flying hither to my side :
O, may no ill my spouse betide !
But ah, I know my wife is dead,
And giants on her limbs have fed,
So strange, so terrible are all
The omens which my heart appal.
O Lakshman, may we yet return
The safety of my love to learn,
To find the child of Janak still
Alive and free from scathe and ill !
Each bird with notes of warning screams,
Though the hot sun still darts his beams.
The moan of deer, the jackal's yell
Of some o'erwhelming misery tell.
O mighty brother, still may she,
My princess, live from danger free !
That semblance of a golden deer
Allured me far away,
I followed nearer and more near,
And longed to take the prey.
I followed where the quarry fled :
My deadly arrow flew,
And as the dying creature bled,
The giant met my view.
Great fear and pain oppress my heart
That dreads the coming blow,
And through my left eye keenly dart
The throbs that herald woe.
Ah Lakshman, all these signs dismay

My soul that sinks with dread.
I know my love is torn away,
Or, haply, she is dead.'

CANTO LIX.

RÁMA'S RETURN.

When Ráma saw his brother stand
With none beside him, all unmanned,
Eager he questioned why he came
So far without the Maithil dame:
'Where is my wife, my darling, she
Who to the wild wood followed me?
Where hast thou left my lady, where
The dame who chose my lot to share?
Where is my love who balms my woe
As through the forest wilds I go,
Unkinged and banished and disgraced,—
My darling of the dainty waist?
She nerves my spirit for the strife,
She, only she gives zest to life.
Dear as my breath is she who vies
In charms with daughters of the skies.
If Janak's child be mine no more,
In splendour fair as virgin ore,
The lordship of the skies and earth
To me were prize of little worth.
Ah, lives she yet, the Maithil dame,
Dear as the soul within this frame?
O, let not all my toil be vain,
The banishment, the woe and pain!
O, let not dark Kaikeyí win
The guerdon of her treacherous sin,
If, Sítá lost, my days I end,

And thou without me homeward wend!
O, let not good Kauśalyá shed
Her bitter tears to mourn me dead,
Nor her proud rival's hest obey,
Strong in her son and queenly sway!
Back to my cot will I repair
If Sítá live to greet me there,
But if my wife have perished, I
Reft of my love will surely die.
O Lakshmaṇ, if I seek my cot,
Look for my love and find her not
Sweet welcome with her smile to give,
I tell thee, I will cease to live.
O answer,—let thy words be plain,—
Lives Sítá yet, or is she slain?
Didst thou thy sacred trust betray
Till ravening giants seized the prey?
Ah me, so young, so soft and fair,
Lapped in all bliss, untried by care,
Rent from her own dear husband, how
Will she support her misery now?
That voice, O Lakshmaṇ, smote thine ear,
And filled, I ween, thy heart with fear,
When on thy name for succour cried
The treacherous giant ere he died.
That voice too like mine own, I ween,
Was heard by the Videhan queen.
She bade thee seek my side to aid,
And quickly was the hest obeyed.
But, ah, thy fault I needs must blame,
To leave alone the helpless dame,
And let the cruel giants sate
The fury of their murderous hate.
Those blood-devouring demons all

Grieve in their souls for Khara's fall,
And Sítá, none to guard her side,
Torn by their cruel hands has died.
I sink, O tamer of thy foes,
Deep in the sea of whelming woes.
What can I now? I must endure
The mighty grief that mocks at cure.'
Thus, all his thoughts on Sítá bent,
To Janasthán the chieftain went,
Hastening on with eager stride,
And Lakshman hurried by his side.
With toil and thirst and hunger worn,
His breast with doubt and anguish torn,
He sought the well-known spot.
Again, again he turned to chide
With quivering lips which terror dried:
He looked, and found her not.
Within his leafy home he sped,
Each pleasant spot he visited
Where oft his darling strayed.
'Tis as I feared', he cried, and there,
Yielding to pangs too great to bear,
He sank by grief dismayed.

CANTO LX.

LAKSHMAṆ REPROVED.

But Ráma ceased not to upbraid
His brother for untimely aid,
And thus, while anguish wrung his breast,
The chief with eager question pressed:
'Why, Lakshmaṇ, didst thou hurry hence
And leave my wife without defence?
I left her in the wood with thee,
And deemed her safe from jeopardy.
When first thy form appeared in view,
I marked that Sítá came not too.
With woe my troubled soul was rent,
Prophetic of the dire event.
Thy coming steps afar I spied,
I saw no Sítá by thy side,
And felt a sudden throbbing dart
Through my left eye, and arm, and heart.'
Lakshmaṇ, with Fortune's marks impressed,
His brother mournfully addressed:
'Not by my heart's free impulse led,
Leaving thy wife to thee I sped;
But by her keen reproaches sent,
O Ráma, to thine aid I went.
She heard afar a mournful cry,
'O save me, Lakshmaṇ, or I die.'
The voice that spoke in moving tone
Smote on her ear and seemed thine own.
Soon as those accents reached her ear

She yielded to her woe and fear.
She wept o'ercome by grief, and cried,
'Fly, Lakshmaṇ, fly to Ráma's side.'
Though many a time she bade me speed,
Her urgent prayer I would not heed.
I bade her in thy strength confide,
And thus with tender words replied:
'No giant roams the forest shade
From whom thy lord need shrink dismayed.
No human voice, believe me, spoke
Those words thy causeless fear that woke.
Can he whose might can save in woe
The heavenly Gods e'er stoop so low,
And with those piteous accents call
For succour like a caitiff thrall?
And why should wandering giants choose
The accents of thy lord to use,
In alien tones my help to crave,
And cry aloud, O Lakshmaṇ, save?
Now let my words thy spirit cheer,
Compose thy thoughts and banish fear.
In hell, in earth, or in the skies
There is not, and there cannot rise
A champion whose strong arm can slay
Thy Ráma in the battle fray.
To heavenly hosts he ne'er would yield
Though Indra led them to the field.'
To soothe her thus I vainly sought:
Her heart with woe was still distraught.
While from her eyes the waters ran
Her bitter speech she thus began:
'Too well I see thy dark intent;
Thy lawless thoughts on me are bent.
Thou hopest, but thy hope is vain,

To win my love, thy brother slain.
Not love, but Bharat's dark decree
To share his exile counselled thee,
Or hearing now his bitter cry
Thou surely to his aid wouldst fly.
For love of me, a stealthy foe
Thou choosest by his side to go,
And now thou longest that my lord
Should die, and wilt no help afford.'

Such were the words the lady said:
With angry fire my eyes were red.
With pale lips quivering in my rage
I hastened from the hermitage.'
He ceased; and frenzied by his pain
The son of Raghu spoke again:
'O brother, for thy fault I grieve,
The Maithil dame alone to leave.
Thou knowest that my arm is strong
To save me from the giant throng,
And yet couldst leave the cottage, spurred
To folly by her angry word.
For this thy deed I praise thee not,—
To leave her helpless in the cot,
And thus thy sacred charge forsake
For the wild words a woman spake.
Yea, thou art all to blame herein,
And very grievous is thy sin,
That anger swayed thy faithless breast
And made thee false to my behest.
An arrow speeding from my bow
Has laid the treacherous giant low,
Who lured me eager for the chase
Far from my hermit dwelling-place.
The string with easy hand I drew,

The arrow as in pastime flew,
The wounded quarry bled.
The borrowed form was cast away,
Before mine eyes a giant lay
With bright gold braceleted.
My arrow smote him in the chest:
The giant by the pain distressed
Raised his loud voice on high.
Far rang the mournful sound: mine own,
It seemed, were accent, voice, and tone,
They made thee leave my spouse alone
And to my rescue fly.'

CANTO LXI.

RÁMA'S LAMENT.

As Ráma sought his leafy cot
Through his left eye keen throbbings shot,
His wonted strength his frame forsook,
And all his body reeled and shook.
Still on those dreadful signs he thought,—
Sad omens with disaster fraught,
And from his troubled heart he cried,
'O, may no ill my spouse betide!'
Longing to gaze on Sítá's face
He hastened to his dwelling-place,
Then sinking neath his misery's weight,
He looked and found it desolate.
Tossing his mighty arms on high
He sought her with an eager cry.
From spot to spot he wildly ran
Each corner of his home to scan.
He looked, but Sítá was not there;
His cot was desolate and bare,
Like streamlet in the winter frost,
The glory of her lilies lost.
With leafy tears the sad trees wept
As a wild wind their branches swept.
Mourned bird and deer, and every flower
Drooped fainting round the lonely bower.
The silvan deities had fled
The spot where all the light was dead,
Where hermit coats of skin displayed,

And piles of sacred grass were laid.
He saw, and maddened by his pain
Cried in lament again, again:
'Where is she, dead or torn away,
Lost, or some hungry giant's prey?
Or did my darling chance to rove
For fruit and blossoms through the grove?
Or has she sought the pool or rill,
Her pitcher from the wave to fill?'
His eager eyes on fire with pain
He roamed about with maddened brain.
Each grove and glade he searched with care,
He sought, but found no Sítá there.
He wildly rushed from hill to hill,
From tree to tree, from rill to rill.
As bitter woe his bosom rent
Still Ráma roamed with fond lament:
'O sweet Kadamba, say has she
Who loved thy bloom been seen by thee?
If thou have seen her face most fair,
Say, gentle tree, I pray thee, where.
O Bel tree with thy golden fruit
Round as her breast, no more be mute.
Where is my radiant darling, gay
In silk that mocks thy glossy spray?
O Arjun, say, where is she now
Who loved to touch thy scented bough?
Do not thy graceful friend forget,
But tell me, is she living yet?
Speak, Basil, thou must surely know,
For like her limbs thy branches show,—
Most lovely in thy fair array
Of twining plant and tender spray.
Sweet Tila, fairest of the trees,

Melodious with the hum of bees,
Where is my darling Sítá, tell,—
The dame who loved thy flowers so well?
Aśoka, act thy gentle part,—
Named Heartsease,[1] give me what thou art,
To these sad eyes my darling show
And free me from this loud of woe.
O Palm, in rich ripe fruitage dressed
Round as the beauties of her breast,
If thou have heart to know and feel,
My peerless consort's fate reveal.
Hast thou, Rose-apple, chanced to view
My darling bright with golden hue?
If thou have seen her quickly speak,
Where is the dame I wildly seek?
O glorious Cassia, thou art gay
With all thy loveliest bloom to-day,
Where is my dear who loved to hold
In her full lap thy flowery gold?'
To many a tree and plant beside,
To Jasmin, Mango, Sál, he cried.
'Say, hast thou seen, O gentle deer,
The fawn-eyed Sítá wandering here?
It may be that my love has strayed
To sport with fawns beneath the shade.
If thou, great elephant, have seen
My darling of the lovely mien,
Whose rounded limbs are soft and fine
As is that lissome trunk of thine,
O noblest of wild creatures, show
Where is the dame thou needs must know.
O tiger, hast thou chanced to see
My darling? very fair is she.

[1] *Aśoka* is compounded of *a* not and *Śoka* grief.

Cast all thy fear away, declare,
Where is my moon-faced darling, where?
There, darling of the lotus eye,
I see thee, and 'tis vain to fly.
Wilt thou not speak, dear love? I see
Thy form half hidden by the tree.
Stay if thou love me, Sítá, stay,
In pity cease thy heartless play.
Why mock me now? thy gentle breast
Was never prone to cruel jest.
'Tis vain behind you bush to steal;
Thy shimmering silks thy path reveal.
Fly not, mine eyes pursue thy way:
For pity's sake, dear Sítá, stay.
Ah me, ah me, my words are vain;
My gentle love is lost or slain.
How could her tender bosom spurn
Her husband on his home-return?
Ah no, my love is surely dead,
Fierce giants on her flesh have fed,
Rending the soft limbs of their prey
When I her lord was far away.
That moon-bright face, that polished brow,
Red lips, bright teeth—what are they now?
Alas, my darling's shapely neck
She loved with chains of gold to deck,—
That neck that mocked the sandal scent,
The ruthless fiends have grasped and rent.
Alas, 'twas vain those arms to raise
Soft as the young tree's tender sprays.
Ah, dainty meal for giants' lips
Were arms and quivering finger tips.
Ah, she who counted many a friend
Was left for fiends to seize and rend,

Was left by me without defence
From ravening giants' violence.
O Lakshman of the arm of might,
Say, is my darling love in sight?
O dearest Sítá, where art thou?
Where is my darling consort now?'
Thus as he cried in wild lament
From grove to grove the mourner went,
Here for a moment sank to rest,
Then started up and onward pressed.
Thus roaming on like one distraught
Still for his vanished love he sought.
He searched in wood and hill and glade,
By rock and brook and wild cascade,
Through groves with restless step he sped
And left no spot unvisited.
Through lawns and woods of vast extent
Still searching for his love he went
With eager steps and fast.
For many a weary hour he toiled,
Still in his fond endeavour foiled,
Yet hoping to the last.

CANTO LXII.

RÁMA'S LAMENT.

When all the toil and search was vain
He sought his leafy home again.
'Twas empty still: all scattered lay
The seats of grass in disarray.
He raised his shapely arms on high
And spoke aloud with bitter cry:
'Where is the Maithil dame?' he said,
'O, whither has my darling fled?
Who can have borne away my dame,
Or feasted on her tender frame?
If, Sítá, hidden by some tree,
Thou joyest still to mock at me,
Cease, cease thy cruel sport, and take
Compassion, or my heart will break.
Bethink thee, love, the gentle fawns
With whom thou playest on the lawns,
Impatient for thy coming wait
With streaming eyes disconsolate.
Reft of my love, I needs must go
Hence to the shades weighed down by woe.
The king our sire will see me there,
And cry, 'O perjured Ráma, where,
Where is thy faith, that thou canst speed
From exile ere the time decreed?
Ah Sítá, whither hast thou fled
And left me here disquieted,
A hapless mourner, reft of hope,

Too feeble with my woe to cope ?
E'en thus indignant Glory flies
The wretch who stains his soul with lies.
If thou, my love, art lost to view,
I in my woe must perish too.'

Thus Ráma by his grief distraught
Wept for the wife he vainly sought,
And Lakshman, whose fraternal breast
Longed for his weal, the chief addressed,
Whose soul gave way beneath the pain
When all his eager search was vain,
Like some great elephant who stands
Sinking upon the treacherous sands :
'Not yet, O wisest chief, despair ;
Renew thy toil with utmost care.
This noble hill where trees are green
Has many a cave and dark ravine.
The Maithil lady day by day
Delighted in the woods to stray.
Deep in the grove she wanders still,
Or walks by blossom-covered rill,
Or fish-loved river stealing through
Tall clusters of the dark bamboo.
Or else the dame with arch design
To prove thy mood, O Prince, and mine,
Far in some sheltering thicket lies
To frighten ere she meet our eyes.
Then come, renew thy labour, trace
The lady to her lurking-place,
And search the wood from side to side
To know where Sítá loves to hide.
Collect thy thoughts, O royal chief,
Nor yield to unavailing grief.'

Thus Lakshman, by affection stirred,

To fresh attempts his brother spurred,
And Ráma, as he ceased, began
With Lakshmaṇ's aid each spot to scan.
In eager search their way they took
Through wood, o'er hill, by pool and brook.
They roamed each mount, nor spared to seek
On ridge and crag and towering peak.
They sought the dame in every spot;
But all in vain: they found her not.
Above, below, on every side
They ranged the hill, and Ráma cried,
'O Lakshmaṇ, O my brother, still
No trace of Sítá on the hill!'
Then Lakshmaṇ as he roamed the wood
Beside his glorious brother stood,
And while fierce grief his bosom burned
This answer to the chief returned:
'Thou, Ráma, after toil and pain
Wilt meet the Maithil dame again,
As Vishṇu, Bali's might subdued,
His empire of the earth renewed.'[1]

Then Ráma cried in mournful tone,
His spirit by his woe o'erthrown:
'The wood is searched from side to side,
No distant spot remains untried,
No lilied pool, no streamlet where
The lotus buds are fresh and fair.
Our eyes have searched the hill with all
His caves and every waterfall,—
But ah, not yet I find my wife,
More precious than the breath of life.'

As thus he mourned his vanished dame
A mighty trembling seized his frame,

[1] See Book I. Canto XXXI.

And by o'erpowering grief assailed,
His troubled senses reeled and failed.
Too great to bear his misery grew,
And many a long hot sigh he drew,
Then as he wept and sobbed and sighed,
'O Sítá, O my love!' he cried.
Then Lakshmaṇ, joining palm to palm,
Tried every art his woe to calm.
But Ráma in his anguish heard
Or heeded not one soothing word,
Still for his spouse he mourned, and shrill
Rang out his lamentation still.

CANTO LXIII.

RÂMA'S LAMENT.

Thus for his wife in vain he sought:
Then, his sad soul with pain distraught,
The hero of the lotus eyes
Filled all the air with frantic cries.
O'erpowered by love's strong influence, he
His absent wife still seemed to see,
And thus with accents weak and faint
Renewed with tears his wild complaint:
'Thou, fairer than their bloom, my spouse,
Art hidden by Aśoka boughs.
Those blooms have power to banish care,
But now they drive me to despair.
Thine arms are like the plantain's stem:
Why let the plantain cover them?
Thou art not hidden, love; thy feet
Betray thee in thy dark retreat.
Thou runnest in thy girlish sport
To flowery trees, thy dear resort.
But cease, O cease, my love, I pray,
To vex me with thy cruel play.
Such mockery in a holy spot
Where hermits dwell beseems thee not.
Ah, now I see thy fickle mind
To scornful mood too much inclined.
Come, large-eyed beauty, I implore;
Lone is the cot so dear before.
No, she is slain by giants; they

Have stolen or devoured their prey,
Or surely at my mournful cry
My darling to her lord would fly.
O Lakshman, see those troops of deer:
In each sad eye there gleams a tear.
Those looks of woe too clearly say
My consort is the giants' prey.
O noblest, fairest of the fair,
Where art thou, best of women, where?
This day will dark Kaikeyí find
Fresh triumph for her evil mind,
When I who with my Sítá came
Return alone, without my dame.
But ne'er can I return to see
Those chambers where my queen should be,
And hear the scornful people speak
Of Ráma as a coward weak.
For mine will be the coward's shame
Who let the foeman steal his dame.
How can I seek my home, or brook
Upon Videha's king to look?
How listen, when he bids me tell,
My wanderings o'er, that all is well?
He, when I meet his eager view,
Will mark that Sítá comes not too,
And when he hears the mournful tale
His wildered sense will reel and fail.
'O Daśaratha,' will he cry,
'Blest in thy mansion in the sky!'
Ne'er to that town my steps shall bend,
That town which Bharat's arms defend,
For e'en the blessed homes above
Would seem a waste without my love.
Leave me, my brother, here, I prav;

To fair Ayodhyá bend thy way.
Without my love I cannot bear
To live one hour in blank despair.
Round Bharat's neck thy fond arms twine,
And greet him with these words of mine:
'Dear brother, still the power retain,
And o'er the land as monarch reign.'
With salutation next incline
Before thy mother, his, and mine.
Still, brother, to my words attend,
And with all care each dame befriend.
To my dear mother's ear relate
My mournful tale and Sítá's fate.'
Thus Ráma gave his sorrow vent,
And from a heart which anguish rent,
Mourned for his wife in loud lament,—
Her of the glorious hair.
From Lakshman's cheek the colour fled,
And o'er his heart came sudden dread,
Sick, faint, and sore disquieted
By woe too great to bear.

CANTO LXIV.

RÁMA'S LAMENT.

Reft of his love, the royal chief,
Weighed down beneath his whelming grief,
Desponding made his brother share
His grievous burden of despair.
Over his sinking bosom rolled
The flood of sorrow uncontrolled,
And as he wept and sighed,
In mournful accents faint and slow
With words congenial to his woe,
To Lakshman thus he cried:
'Brother, I ween, beneath the sun,
Of all mankind there lives not one
So full of sin, whose hand has done
Such cursed deeds as mine.
For my sad heart with misery bleeds,
As, guerdon of those evil deeds,
Still greater woe to woe succeeds
In never-ending line.
A life of sin I freely chose,
And from my past transgression flows
A ceaseless flood of bitter woes
My folly to repay.
The fruit of sin has ripened fast,
Through many a sorrow have I passed,
And now the crowning grief at last
Falls on my head to-day.
From all my faithful friends I fled,

My sire is numbered with the dead,
My royal rank is forfeited,
  My mother far away.
These woes on which I sadly think
Fill, till it raves above the brink,
The stream of grief in which I sink,—
  The flood which naught can stay.
Ne'er, brother, ne'er have I complained;
Though long by toil and trouble pained,
Without a murmur I sustained
  The woes of woodland life.
But fiercer than the flames that rise
When crackling wood the food supplies,—
Flashing a glow through evening skies,—
  This sorrow for my wife.
Some cruel fiend has seized the prey
And torn my trembling love away,
While, as he bore her through the skies,
She shrieked aloud with frantic cries,
In tones of fear which, wild and shrill,
Retained their native sweetness still.
Ah me, that breast so soft and sweet,
For sandal's precious perfume meet,
Now all distained with dust and gore,
Shall meet my fond caress no more.
That face, whose lips with tones so clear
Made pleasant music, sweet to hear,—
With soft locks plaited o'er the brow,—
Some giant's hand is on it now.
It smiles not, as the dear light fails
When Ráhu's jaw the moon assails.
Ah, my true love! that shapely neck
She loved with fairest chains to deck,
The cruel demons rend, and drain

The lifeblood from each mangled vein.
Ah, when the savage monsters came
And dragged away the helpless dame,
The lady of the long soft eye
Called like a lamb with piteous cry.
Beneath this rock, O Lakshman, see,
My peerless consort sat with me,
And gently talked to thee the while,
Her sweet lips opening with a smile.
Here is that fairest stream which she
Loved ever, bright Godávarí.
Ne'er can the dame have passed this way:
So far alone she would not stray.
Nor has my darling, lotus-eyed,
Sought lilies by the river's side,
For without me she ne'er would go
To streamlets where the wild flowers grow.
Tell me not, brother, she has strayed
To the dark forest's distant shade
Where blooming boughs are gay and sweet,
And bright birds love the cool retreat.
Alone my love would never dare,—
My timid love,—to wander there.
O Lord of Day whose eye sees all
We act and plan, on thee I call;
For naught is hidden from thy sight,—
Great witness thou of wrong and right.
Where is she, lost or torn away?
Dispel my torturing doubt and say.
And O thou Wind who blowest free,
The worlds have naught concealed from thee.
List to my prayer, reveal one trace
Of her, the glory of her race.
Say, is she stolen hence, or dead,

Or do her feet the forest tread?'
Thus with disordered senses, faint
With woe, he poured his sad complaint,
And then, a better way to teach,
Wise Lakshman spoke in seemly speech:
'Up, brother dear, thy grief subdue,
With heart and soul thy search renew.
When woes oppress and dangers threat
Brave effort ne'er was fruitless yet.'
He spoke, but Ráma gave no heed
To valiant Lakshman's prudent rede.
With double force the flood of pain
Rushed o'er his yielding soul again.

CANTO LXV.

RÁMA'S WRATH.

With piteous voice, by woe subdued,
Thus Raghu's son his speech renewed:
'Thy steps, my brother, quickly turn
To bright Godávarí and learn
If Sítá to the stream have hied
To cull the lilies on its side.'
Obedient to the words he said,
His brother to the river sped.
The shelving banks he searched in vain,
And then to Ráma turned again.
'I searched, but found her not,' he cried;
'I called aloud, but none replied.
Where can the Maithil lady stray,
Whose sight would chase our cares away?
I know not where, her steps untraced,
Roams Sítá of the dainty waist.'
When Ráma heard the words he spoke
Again he sank beneath the stroke,
And with a bosom anguish-fraught
Himself the lovely river sought.
There standing on the shelving side,
'O Sítá, where art thou?' he cried.
No spirit voice an answer gave,
No murmur from the trembling wave
Of sweet Godávarí declared
The outrage which the fiend had dared.
'O speak!' the pitying spirits cried,

But yet the stream their prayer denied,
Nor dared she, coldly mute, relate
To the sad chief his darling's fate.
Of Rávaṇ's awful form she thought,
And the dire deed his arm had wrought,
And still withheld, by fear dismayed,
The tale for which the mourner prayed.
When hope was none, his heart to cheer,
That the bright stream his cry would hear,
While sorrow for his darling tore
His longing soul he spake once more :
'Though I have sought with tears and sighs
Godávarí no word replies.
O say, what answer can I frame
To Janak father of my dame?
Or how before her mother stand
Leading no Sítá by the hand?
Where is my loyal love who went
Forth with her lord to banishment?
Her faith to me she nobly held
Though from my realm and home expelled,—
A hermit, nursed on woodland fare,—
She followed still and soothed my care.
Of all my friends am I bereft,
Nor is my faithful consort left.
How slowly will the long nights creep
While comfortless I wake and weep!
O, if my wife may yet be found,
With humble love I'll wander round
This Janasthán, Praśravaṇ's hill,
Mandákiní's delightful rill.
See how the deer with gentle eyes
Look on my face and sympathize.
I mark their soft expression : each

Would soothe me, if it could, with speech.'
A while the anxious throng he eyed,
And 'Where is Sítá, where?' he cried.
Thus while hot tears his utterance broke
The mourning son of Raghu spoke.
The deer in pity for his woes
Obeyed the summons and arose.
Upon his right thy stood, and raised
Their sad eyes up to heaven and gazed.
Each to that quarter bent her look
Which Rávaṇ with his captive took.
Then Raghu's son again they viewed,
And toward that point their way pursued.
Then Lakshmaṇ watched their looks intent
As moaning on their way they went,
And marked each sign which struck his sense
With mute expressive influence,
Then as again his sorrow woke
Thus to his brother chief he spoke:
'Those deer thy eager question heard
And rose at once by pity stirred:
See, in thy search their aid they lend,
See, to the south their looks they bend.
Arise, dear brother, let us go
The way their eager glances show,
If haply sign or trace descried
Our footsteps in the search may guide.'
The son of Raghu gave assent,
And quickly to the south they went;
With eager eyes the earth he scanned,
And Lakshmaṇ followed close at hand.
As each to other spake his thought,
And round with anxious glances sought,
Scattered before them in the way,

Blooms of a fallen garland lay.
When Ráma saw that flowery rain
He spoke once more with bitterest pain:
'O Lakshmaṇ, every flower that lies
Here on the ground I recognize.
I culled them in the grove, and there
My darling twined them in her hair.
The sun, the earth, the genial breeze
Have spared these flowers my soul to please.'
Then to that woody hill he prayed,
Whence flashed afar each wild cascade:
'O best of mountains, hast thou seen
A dame of perfect form and mien
In some sweet spot with trees o'ergrown,—
My darling whom I left alone?'
Then as a lion threats a deer
He thundered with a voice of fear:
'Reveal her, mountain, to my view
With golden limbs and golden hue.
Where is my darling Sítá? speak
Before I rend thee peak from peak.'
The mountain seemed her track to show,
But told not all he sought to know.
Then Daśaratha's son renewed
His summons as the mount he viewed:
'Soon as my flaming arrows fly,
Consumed to ashes shalt thou lie
Without a herb or bud or tree,
And birds no more shall dwell in thee.
And if this stream my prayer deny,
My wrath this day her flood shall dry,
Because she lends no aid to trace
My darling of the lotus face.'
Thus Ráma spake as though his ire

Would scorch them with his glance of fire;
Then searching farther on the ground
The footprint of a fiend he found,
And small light traces here and there,
Where Sítá in her great despair,
Shrieking for Ráma's help, had fled
Before the giant's mighty tread.
His careful eye each trace surveyed
Which Sítá and the fiend had made,—
The quivers and the broken bow
And ruined chariot of the foe,—
And told, distraught by fear and grief,
His tidings to his brother chief:
'O Lakshman, here,' he cried 'behold
My Sítá's earrings dropped with gold.
Here lie her garlands torn and rent,
Here lies each glittering ornament.
O look, the ground on every side
With blood-like drops of gold is dyed.
The fiends who wear each strange disguise
Have seized, I ween, the helpless prize.
My lady, by their hands o'erpowered,
Is slaughtered, mangled, and devoured.
Methinks two fearful giants came
And waged fierce battle for the dame.
Whose, Lakshman, was this mighty bow
With pearls and gems in glittering row?
Cast to the ground the fragments lie,
And still their glory charms the eye.
A bow so mighty sure was planned
For heavenly God or giant's hand.
Whose was this coat of golden mail
Which, though its lustre now is pale,
Shone like the sun of morning, bright

With studs of glittering lazulite?
Whose, Lakshmaṇ, was this bloom-wreathed shade
With all its hundred ribs displayed?
This screen, most meet for royal brow,
With broken staff lies useless now.
And these tall asses, goblin-faced,
With plates of golden harness graced,
Whose hideous forms are stained with gore,—
Who is the lord whose yoke they bore?
Whose was this pierced and broken car
That shoots a flame-like blaze afar?
Whose these spent shafts at random spread,
Each fearful with its iron head,—
With golden mountings fair to see,
Long as a chariot's axle-tree?
These quivers see, which, rent in twain,
Their sheaves of arrows still contain.
Whose was this driver? Dead and cold,
His hands the whip and reins still hold.
See, Lakshmaṇ, here the foot I trace
Of man, nay, one of giant race.
The hatred that I nursed of old
Grows mightier now a hundred fold
Against these giants, fierce of heart,
Who change their forms by magic art.
Slain, eaten by the giant press,
Or stolen is the votaress,
Nor could her virtue bring defence
To Sítá seized and hurried hence.
O, if my love be slain or lost
All hope of bliss for me is crossed.
The power of all the worlds were vain
To bring one joy to soothe my pain.
The spirits with their blinded eyes

Would look in wonder, and despise
The Lord who made the worlds, the great
Creator when compassionate.
And so, I ween, the Immortals turn
Cold eyes upon me now, and spurn
The weakling prompt at pity's call,
Devoted to the good of all.
But from this day behold me changed,
From every gentle grace estranged.
Now be it mine all life to slay,
And sweep these cursed fiends away.
As the great sun leaps up the sky,
And the cold moonbeams fade and die,
So vengeance rises in my breast,
One passion conquering all the rest.
Gandharvas in their radiant place,
The Yakshas, and the giant race,
Kinnars and men shall look in vain
For joy they ne'er shall see again.
The anguish of my great despair,
O Lakshman, fills the heaven and air;
And I in wrath all life will slay
Within the triple world to-day.
Unless the Gods in heaven who dwell
Restore my Sítá safe and well,
I armed with all the fires of Fate
The triple world will devastate.
The troubled stars from heaven shall fall,
The moon be wrapped in gloomy pall,
The fire be quenched, the wind be stilled,
The radiant sun grow dark and chilled;
Crushed every mountain's towering pride,
And every lake and river dried,
Dead every creeper, plant, and tree,

And lost for aye the mighty sea.
Thou shalt the world this day behold
In wild disorder uncontrolled,
With dying life-which naught defends
From the fierce storm my bowstring sends.
My shafts this day, for Sítá's sake,
The life of every fiend shall take.
The Gods this day shall see the force
That wings my arrows on their course,
And mark how far that course is held,
By my unsparing wrath impelled.
No God, not one of Daitya strain,
Goblin or Rákshas shall remain.
My wrath shall end the worlds, and all
Demons and Gods therewith shall fall.
Each world which Gods, the Dánav race,
And giants make their dwelling place,
Shall fall beneath my arrows sent
In fury when my bow is bent.
The arrows loosened from my string
Confusion on the worlds shall bring.
For she is lost or breathes no more,
Nor will the Gods my love restore.
Hence all on earth with life and breath
This day I dedicate to death.
All, till my darling they reveal,
The fury of my shafts shall feel.'
Thus as he spake by rage impelled,
Red grew his eyes, his fierce lips swelled.
His bark coat round his form he drew
And coiled his hermit braids anew.
Like Rudra when he yearned to slay
The demon Tripur[1] in the fray,

[1] An Asur or demon, king of Tripura, the modern Tipperah.

So looked the hero brave and wise,
The fury flashing from his eyes.
Then Ráma, conqueror of the foe,
From Lakshman's hand received his bow,
Strained the great string, and laid thereon
A deadly dart that flashed and shone,
And spake these words as fierce in ire
As He who ends the worlds with fire:
'As age and time and death and fate
All life with checkless power await,
So Lakshman, in my wrath to-day
My vengeful might shall brook no stay.
Unless this day I see my dame
In whose sweet form is naught to blame,—
Yea, as before, my love behold
Fair with bright teeth and perfect mould,
This world shall feel a deadly blow
Destroyed with ruthless overthrow,
And serpent lords and Gods of air,
Gandharvas, men, the doom shall share.'

CANTO LXVI.

LAKSHMAṆ'S SPEECH.

He stood incensed with eyes of flame,
Still mourning for his ravished dame,
Determined, like the fire of Fate,
To leave the wide world desolate.
His ready bow the hero eyed,
And as again, again he sighed,
The triple world would fain consume
Like Hara[1] in the day of doom.
Then Lakshmaṇ moved with sorrow viewed
His brother in unwonted mood,
And reverent palm to palm applied,
Thus spoke with lips which terror dried:
'Thy heart was ever soft and kind,
To every creature's good inclined.
Cast not thy tender mood away,
Nor yield to anger's mastering sway.
The moon for gentle grace is known,
The sun has splendour all his own,
The restless wind is free and fast,
And earth in patience unsurpassed.
So glory with her noble fruit
Is thine eternal attribute.
O, let not, for the sin of one,
The triple world be all undone.
I know not whose this car that lies
In fragments here before our eyes,

[1] Śiva.

Nor who the chiefs who met and fought,
Nor what the prize the foemen sought;
Who marked the ground with hoof and wheel,
Or whose the hand that plied the steel
Which left this spot, the battle o'er,
Thus sadly dyed with drops of gore.
Searching with utmost care I view
The signs of one and not of two.
Where'er I turn mine eyes I trace
No mighty host about the place.
Then mete not out for one offence
This all-involving recompense.
For kings should use the sword they bear,
But mild in time should learn to spare.
Thou, ever moved by misery's call,
Wast the great hope and stay of all.
Throughout this world who would not blame
This outrage on thy ravished dame?
Gandharvas, Dánavs, Gods, the trees,
The rocks, the rivers, and the seas,
Can ne'er in aught thy soul offend,
As one whom holiest rites befriend.
But him who dared to steal the dame
Pursue, O King, with ceaseless aim,
With me, the hermits' holy band,
And thy great bow to arm thy hand.
By every mighty flood we'll seek,
Each wood, each hill from base to peak.
To the fair homes of Gods we'll fly,
And bright Gandharvas in the sky,
Until we reach, where'er he be,
The wretch who stole thy spouse from thee.
Then if the Gods will not restore
Thy Sítá when the search is o'er,

Then, royal lord of Kośal's land,
No longer hold thy vengeful hand.
If meekness, prayer, and right be weak
To bring thee back the dame we seek,
Up, brother, with a deadly shower
Of gold-bright shafts thy foes o'erpower,
Fierce as the flashing levin sent
From King Mahendra's firmament.'

CANTO LXVII.

RÁMA APPEASED.

As Rámha, pierced by sorrow's sting,
Lamented like a helpless thing,
And by his mighty woe distraught
Was last in maze of troubled thought,
Sumitrá's son with loving care
Consoled him in his wild despair,
And while his feet he gently pressed
With words like these the chief addressed:
'For sternest vow and noblest deed
Was Daśaratha blessed with seed.
Thee for his son the king obtained,
Like Amrit by the Gods regained.
Thy gentle graces won his heart,
And all too weak to live apart
The monarch died, as Bharat told,
And lives on high mid Gods enrolled.
If thou, O Ráma, wilt not bear
This grief which fills thee with despair,
How shall a weaker man e'er hope,
Infirm and mean, with woe to cope?
Take heart, I pray thee, noblest chief;
What man who breathes is free from grief?
Misfortunes come and burn like flame,
Then fly as quickly as they came.
Yayáti son of Nahush reigned
With Indra on the throne he gained,
But falling for a light offence

He mourned a while the consequence.
Vaśishṭha, reverend saint and sage,
Priest of our sire from youth to age,
Begot a hundred sons, but they
Were smitten in a single day.[1]
And she, the queen whom all revere,
The mother whom we hold so dear,
The earth herself not seldom feels
Fierce fever when she shakes and reels.
And those twin lights, the world's great eyes,
On which the universe relies,—
Does not eclipse at times assail
Their brilliance till their fires grow pale?
The mighty Powers, the Immortal Blest
Bend to a law which none contest.
No God, no bodied life is free
From conquering Fate's supreme decree.
E'en Śakra's self must reap the meed
Of virtue and of sinful deed.
And O great lord of men, wilt thou
Helpless beneath thy misery bow?
No, if thy dame be lost or dead,
O hero, still be comforted,
Nor yield for ever to thy woe
O'ermastered like the mean and low.
Thy peers, with keen far-reaching eyes,
Spend not their hours in ceaseless sighs:
In dire distress, in whelming ill
Their manly looks are hopeful still.
To this, great chief, thy reason bend,
And earnestly the truth perpend.
By reason's aid the wisest learn
The good and evil to discern.

[1] See Book I., Canto LIX.

With sin and goodness scarcely known
Faint light by chequered lives is shown;
Without some clear undoubted deed
We mark not how the fruits succeed.
In time of old, O thou most brave,
To me thy lips such counsel gave.
Vrihaspati[1] can scarcely find
New wisdom to instruct thy mind.
For thine is wit and genius high
Meet for the children of the sky.
I rouse that heart benumbed by pain
And call to vigorous life again.
Be manly godlike vigour shown;
Put forth that noblest strength, thine own.
Strive, best of old Ishváku's strain,
Strive till the conquered foe be slain.
Where is the profit or the joy
If thy fierce rage the worlds destroy?
Search till thou find the guilty foe,
Then let thy hand no mercy show.'

[1] The preceptor of the Gods.

CANTO LXVIII.

JAṬÁYUS.

Thus faithful Lakshmaṇ strove to cheer
The prince with counsel wise and clear,
Who, prompt to seize the pith of all,
Let not that wisdom idly fall.
With vigorous effort he restrained
The passion in his breast that reigned,
And leaning on his bow for rest
His brother Lakshmaṇ thus addressed:
'How shall we labour now, reflect;
Whither again our search direct?
Brother, what plan canst thou devise
To bring her to these longing eyes?'
To him by toil and sorrow tried
The prudent Lakshmaṇ thus replied:
'Come, though our labour yet be vain,
And search through Janasthán again,—
A realm where giant foes abound,
And trees and creepers hide the ground.
For there are caverns deep and dread,
By deer and wild birds tenanted,
And hills with many a dark abyss,
Grotto and rock and precipice.
There bright Gandharvas love to dwell,
And Kinnars in each bosky dell.
With me thy eager search to aid
Be every hill and cave surveyed.
Great chiefs like thee, the best of men,

Endowed with sense and piercing ken,
Though tried by trouble never fail,
Like rooted hills that mock the gale.'

Then Ráma, pierced by anger's sting,
Laid a keen arrow on his string,
And by the faithful Lakshmaṇ's side
Roamed through the forest far and wide.
Jaṭâyus there with blood-drops dyed,
Lying upon the ground he spied,
Huge as a mountain's shattered crest,
Mid all the birds of air the best.
In wrath the mighty bird he eyed,
And thus the chief to Lakshmaṇ cried:

'Ah me, these signs the truth betray;
My darling was the vulture's prey.
Some demon in the bird's disguise
Roams through the wood that round us lies.
On large-eyed Sítá he has fed,
And rests him now with wings outspread.
But my keen shafts, whose flight is true,
Shall pierce the ravenous monster through.'

An arrow on the string he laid,
And rushing near the bird surveyed,
While earth to ocean's distant side
Trembled beneath his furious stride.
With blood and froth on neck and beak
The dying bird assayed to speak,
And with a piteous voice, distressed,
Thus Daśaratha's son addressed:

'She whom like some sweet herb of grace
Thou seekest in this lonely place,
Fair lady, is fierce Rávaṇ's prey,
Who took, beside, my life away.
Lakshmaṇ and thou had parted hence

And left the dame without defence.
I saw her swiftly borne away
By Rávaṇ's might which none could stay.
I hurried to the lady's aid,
I crushed his car and royal shade,
And putting forth my warlike might
Hurled Rávaṇ to the earth in fight.
Here, Ráma, lies his broken bow,
Here lie the arrows of the foe.
There on the ground before thee are
The fragments of his battle car.
There bleeds the driver whom my wings
Beat down with ceaseless buffetings.
When toil my aged strength subdued,
His sword my weary pinions hewed.
Then lifting up the dame he bare
His captive through the fields of air.
Thy vengeful blows from me restrain,
Already by the giant slain.'

When Ráma heard the vulture tell
The tale that proved his love so well,
His bow upon the ground he placed,
And tenderly the bird embraced:
Then to the earth he fell o'erpowered,
And burning tears both brothers showered,
For double pain and anguish pressed
Upon the patient hero's breast.
The solitary bird he eyed
Who in the lone wood gasped and sighed,
And as again his anguish woke
Thus Ráma to his brother spoke:

'Expelled from power the woods I tread,
My spouse is lost, the bird is dead.
A fate so sad, I ween, would tame

The vigour of the glorious flame.
If I to cool my fever tried
To cross the deep from side to side,
The sea,—so hard my fate,—would dry
His waters as my feet came nigh.
In all this world there lives not one
So cursed as I beneath the sun;
So strong a net of misery cast
Around me holds the captive fast.
Best of all birds that ply the wing,
Loved, honoured by our sire the king,
The vulture, in my fate enwound,
Lies bleeding, dying on the ground.'

Then Ráma and his brother stirred
By pity mourned the royal bird,
And, as their hands his limbs caressed,
Affection for a sire expressed.
And Ráma to his bosom strained
The bird with mangled wings distained,
With crimson blood-drops dyed.
He fell, and shedding many a tear,
'Where is my spouse than life more dear?
Where is my love?' he cried.

CANTO LXIX.

THE DEATH OF JAṬÁYUS.

As Ráma viewed with heart-felt pain
The vulture whom the fiend had slain,
In words with tender love impressed
His brother chief he thus addressed:
'This royal bird with faithful thought
For my advantage strove and fought.
Slain by the fiend in mortal strife
For me he yields his noble life.
See, Lakshman, how his wounds have bled;
His struggling breath will soon have fled.
Faint is his voice, and near to die,
He scarce can lift his trembling eye.
Jaṭáyus, if thou still can speak,
Give, give the answer that I seek.
The fate of ravished Sítá tell,
And how thy mournful chance befell.
Say why the giant stole my dame:
What have I done that he could blame?
What fault in me has Rávaṇ seen
That he should rob me of my queen?
How looked the lady's moon-bright cheek?
What were the words she found to speak?
His strength, his might, his deeds declare:
And tell the form he loves to wear.
To all my questions make reply:
Where does the giant's dwelling lie?'
The noble bird his glances bent,

On Ráma as he made lament,
And in low accents faint and weak
With anguish thus began to speak:
'Fierce Rávan, king of giant race,
Stole Sítá from thy dwelling-place.
He calls his magic art to aid
With wind and cloud and gloomy shade.
When in the fight my power was spent
My wearied wings he cleft and rent.
Then round the dame his arms he threw,
And to the southern region flew.
O Raghu's son, I gasp for breath,
My swimming sight is dim in death.
E'en now before my vision pass
Bright trees of gold with hair of grass.
The hour the impious robber chose
Brings on the thief a flood of woes.
The giant in his haste forgot
'Twas Vinda's hour,[1] or heeded not.
Those robbed at such a time obtain
Their plundered store and wealth again.
He, like a fish that takes the bait,
In briefest time shall meet his fate.
Now be thy troubled heart controlled
And for thy lady's loss consoled,
For thou wilt slay the fiend in fight
And with thy dame have new delight.'
With senses clear, though sorely tried,
The royal vulture thus replied,
While as he sank beneath his pain
Forth rushed the tide of blood again.
'Him,[2] brother of the Lord of Gold,

[1] From the root *vid*, to find.

[2] Rávaṇ.

Viśravas' self begot of old.'
Thus spoke the bird, and stained with gore
Resigned the breath that came no more.
'Speak, speak again!' thus Ráma cried,
With reverent palm to palm applied,
But from the frame the spirit fled
And to the skiey regions sped.
The breath of life had passed away,
Stretched on the ground the body lay.
When Ráma saw the vulture lie,
Huge as a hill, with darksome eye,
With many a poignant woe distressed
His brother chief he thus addressed:
'Amid these haunted shades content
Full many a year this bird has spent.
His life in home of giants passed,
In Daṇḍak wood he dies at last.
The years in lengthened course have fled
Untroubled o'er the vulture's head,
And now he lies in death, for none
The stern decrees of Fate may shun.
See, Lakshmaṇ, how the vulure fell
While for my sake he battled well,
And strove to free with onset bold
My Sítá from the giant's hold.
Supreme amid the vulture kind
His ancient rule the bird resigned,
And conquered in the fruitless strife
Gave for my sake his noble life.
O Lakshmaṇ, many a time we see
Great souls who keep the law's decree,
With whom the weak sure refuge find,
In creatures of inferior kind.
The loss of her, my darling queen,

Strikes with a pang less fiercely keen
Than now this slaughtered bird to see
Who nobly fought and died for me.
As Daśaratha, good and great,
Was glorious in his high estate,
Honoured by all, to all endeared,
So was this royal bird revered.
Bring fuel for the funeral rite;
These hands the solemn fire shall light
And on the burning pyre shall lay
The bird who died for me to-day.
Now on the gathered wood shall lie
The lord of all the birds that fly,
And I will burn with honours due
My champion whom the giant slew.
O royal bird of noblest heart,
Graced with all funeral rites depart
To bright celestial seats above,
Rewarded for thy faithful love.
Dwell in thy happy home with those
Whose constant fires of worship rose.
Live blest amid the unyielding brave,
And those who land in largess gave.'

Sore grief upon his bosom weighed
As on the pyre the bird he laid,
And bade the kindled flame ascend
To burn the body of his friend.
Then with his brother by his side
The hero to the forest hied.
There many a stately deer he slew,
The flesh around the bird to strew.
The venison into balls he made,
And on fair grass before him laid.
Then that the parted soul might rise

And find free passage to the skies,
Each solemn word and text he said
Which Bráhmans utter o'er the dead.
Then hastening went the princely pair
To bright Godávarí, and there
Libations of the stream they poured
In honour of the vulture lord,
With solemn ritual to the slain,
As scripture's holy texts ordain.
Thus offerings to the bird they gave
And bathed their bodies in the wave.
The vulture monarch having wrought
A hard and glorious feat,
Honoured by Ráma sage in thought,
Soared to his blissful seat.
The brothers, when each rite was paid
To him of birds supreme,
Their hearts with new-found comfort stayed,
And turned them from the stream.
Like sovereigns of celestial race
Within the wood they came,
Each pondering the means to trace
The captor of the dame.

CANTO LXX.

KABANDHA.

When every rite was duly paid
The princely brothers onward strayed,
And eager in the lady's quest
They turned their footsteps to the west.
Through lonely woods that round them lay
Ikshváku's children made their way,
And armed with bow and shaft and brand
Pressed onward to the southern land.
Thick trees and shrubs and creepers grew
In the wild grove they hurried through.
'Twas dark and drear and hard to pass
For tangled thorns and matted grass.
Still onward with a southern course
They made their way with vigorous force,
And passing through the mazes stood
Beyond that vast and fearful wood.
With toil and hardship yet unspent
Three leagues from Janasthán they went,
And speeding on their way at last
Within the wood of Krauncha[1] passed:
A fearful forest wild and black
As some huge pile of cloudy rack,
Filled with all birds and beasts, where grew
Bright blooms of every varied hue.
On Sítá bending every thought
Through all the mighty wood they sought,

[1] Or Curlews' Wood.

And at the lady's loss dismayed
Here for a while and there they stayed.
Then turning farther eastward they
Pursued three leagues their weary way,
Passed Krauncha's wood and reached the grove
Where elephants rejoiced to rove.
The chiefs that awful wood surveyed
Where deer and wild birds filled each glade,
Where scarce a step the foot could take
For tangled shrub and tree and brake.
There in a mountain's woody side
A cave the royal brothers spied,
With dread abysses deep as hell,
Where darkness never ceased to dwell.
When, pressing on, the lords of men
Stood near the entrance of the den,
They saw within the dark recess
A huge misshapen giantess;
A thing the timid heart that shook
With fearful shape and savage look.
Terrific fiend, her voice was fierce,
Long were her teeth to rend and pierce.
The monster gorged her horrid feast
Of flesh of many a savage beast,
While her long locks, at random flung,
Dishevelled o'er her shoulders hung.
Their eyes the royal brothers raised,
And on the fearful monster gazed.
Forth from her den she came and glanced
At Lakshmaṇ as he first advanced,
Her eager arms to hold him spread,
And 'Come and be my love' she said,
Then as she held him to her breast,
The prince in words like these addressed:

'Behold thy treasure fond and fair:
Ayomukhí[1] the name I bear.
In thickets of each lofty hill,
On islets of each brook and rill,
With me delighted shalt thou play,
And live for many a lengthened day.'
Enraged he heard the monster woo;
His ready sword he swiftly drew,
And the sharp steel that quelled his foes
Cut through her breast and ear and nose.
Thus mangled by his vengeful sword
In rage and pain the demon roared,
And hideous with her awful face
Sped to her secret dwelling place.
Soon as the fiend had fled from sight,
The brothers, dauntless in their might,
Reached a wild forest dark and dread
Whose tangled ways were hard to tread.
Then bravest Lakshmaṇ, virtuous youth,
The friend of purity and truth,
With reverent palm to palm applied
Thus to his glorious brother cried:
'My arm presaging throbs amain,
My troubled heart is sick with pain,
And cheerless omens ill portend
Where'er my anxious eyes I bend.
Dear brother, hear my words; advance
Resolved and armed for every chance,
For every sign I mark to-day
Foretels a peril in the way.
This bird of most ill-omened note,
Loud screaming with discordant throat,
Announces with a warning cry

[1] Iron-faced.

That strife and victory are nigh.'

Then as the chiefs their search pursued
Throughout the dreary solitude,
They heard amazed a mighty sound
That broke the very trees around,
As though a furious tempest passed
Crushing the wood beneath its blast.
Then Ráma raised his trusty sword,
And both the hidden cause explored.
There stood before their wondering eyes
A fiend broad-chested, huge of size.
A vast misshapen trunk they saw
In height surpassing nature's law.
It stood before them dire and dread
Without a neck, without a head.
Tall as some hill aloft in air,
Its limbs were clothed with bristling hair,
And deep below the monster's waist
His vast misshapen mouth was placed.
His form was huge, his voice was loud
As some dark-tinted thunder cloud.
Forth from his ample chest there came
A brilliance as of gushing flame.
Beneath long lashes, dark and keen
The monster's single eye was seen.
Deep in his chest, long, fiercely bright,
It glittered with terrific light.
He swallowed down his savage fare
Of lion, bird, and slaughtered bear,
And with huge teeth exposed to view
O'er his great lips his tongue he drew.
His arms unshapely, vast and dread,
A league in length, he raised and spread.
He seized with monstrous hands a herd

Of deer and many a bear and bird.
Among them all he picked and chose,
Drew forward these, rejected those.
Before the princely pair he stood
Barring their passage through the wood.
A league of shade the chiefs had passed
When on the fiend their eyes they cast.
A monstrous shape without a head
With mighty arms before him spread,
They saw that hideous trunk appear
That struck the trembling eye with fear.
Then, stretching to their full extent
His awful arms with fingers bent,
Round Raghu's princely sons he cast
Each grasping limb and held them fast.
Though strong of arm and fierce in fight,
Each armed with bow and sword to smite,
The royal brothers, brave and bold,
Were helpless in the giant's hold.
Then Raghu's son, heroic still,
Felt not a pang his bosom thrill;
But young, with no protection near,
His brother's heart was sad with fear,
And thus with trembling tongue he said
To Ráma, sore disquieted:
'Ah me, ah me, my days are told:
O see me in the giant's hold.
Fly, son of Raghu, swiftly flee,
And thy dear self from danger free.
Me to the fiend an offering give;
Fly at thine ease thyself and live.
Thou, great Kakutstha's son, I ween,
Wilt find ere long thy Maithil queen.
And when thou holdest, throned again,

Thine old hereditary reign,
With servants prompt to do thy will,
O think upon thy brother still.'
As thus the trembling Lakshman cried,
The dauntless Ráma thus replied;
'Brother, from causeless dread forbear.
A chief like thee should scorn despair.'
He spoke to soothe his wild alarm;
Then fierce Kabandha[1] long of arm,
Among the Dánavs[2] first and best,
The sons of Raghu thus addressed:
'What men are you, whose shoulders show
Broad as a bull's, with sword and bow,
Who roam this dark and horrid place,
Brought by your fate before my face?
Declare by what occasion led
These solitary wilds you tread,
With swords and bows and shafts to pierce,
Like bulls whose horns are strong and fierce.
Why have you sought this forest land
Where wild with hunger's pangs I stand?
Now as your steps my path have crossed
Esteem your lives already lost.'
The royal brothers heard with dread
The words which fierce Kabandha said.
And Ráma to his brother cried,
Whose cheek by blanching fear was dried:
'Alas, we fall, O valiant chief,
From sorrow into direr grief,
Still mourning her I hold so dear
We see our own destruction near.

[1] Kabandha means a trunk.

[2] A class of mythological giants. In the Epic period they were probably personifications of the aborigines of India.

Mark, brother, mark what power has time
O'er all that live, in every clime.
Now, lord of men, thyself and me
Involved in fatal danger see.
'Tis not, be sure, the might of Fate
That crushes all with deadly weight.
Ne'er can the brave and strong, who know
The use of spear and sword and bow,
The force of conquering time withstand,
But fall like barriers built of sand.'
Thus in calm strength which naught could shake
The son of Daśaratha spake,
With glory yet unstained.
Upon Sumitrá's son he bent
His eyes, and firm in his intent
His dauntless heart maintained.

CANTO LXXI.

KABANDHA'S SPEECH.

Kabandha saw each chieftain stand
Imprisoned by his mighty hand,
Which like a snare around him pressed,
And thus the royal pair addressed :
'Why, warriors, are your glances bent
On me whom hungry pangs torment?
Why stand with wildered senses? Fate
Has brought you now my maw to sate.'
When Lakshman heard, a while appalled,
His ancient courage he recalled,
And to his brother by his side
With seasonable counsel cried :
'This vilest of the giant race
Will draw us to his side apace.
Come, rouse thee ; let the vengeful sword
Smite off his arms, my honoured lord.
This awful giant, vast of size,
On his huge strength of arm relies,
And o'er the world victorious, thus
With mighty force would slaughter us.
But in cold blood to slay, O King,
Discredit on the brave would bring,
As when some victim in the rite
Shuns not the hand upraised to smite.'

The monstrous fiend, to anger stirred,
The converse of the brothers heard.
His horrid mouth he opened wide

And drew the princes to his side.
They, skilled due time and place to note,
Unsheathed their glittering swords and smote,
Till from the giant's shoulders they
Had hewn the mighty arms away.
His trenchant falchion Ráma plied
And smote him on the better side,
While valiant Lakshmaṇ on the left
The arm that held him prisoned cleft.
Then to the earth dismembered fell
The monster with a hideous yell,
And like a cloud's his deep roar went
Through earth and air and firmament.
Then as the giant's blood flowed fast,
On his cleft limbs his eye he cast,
And called upon the princely pair
Their names and lineage to declare.
Him then the noble Lakshmaṇ, blest
With fortune's favouring marks, addressed,
And told the fiend his brother's name
And the high blood of which he came:
'Ikshváku's heir here Ráma stands,
Illustrious through a hundred lands.
I, younger brother of the heir,
O fiend, the name of Lakshmaṇ bear.
His mother stole his realm away
And drove him forth in woods to stray.
Thus through the mighty forest he
Roamed with his royal wife and me.
While glorious as a God he made
His dwelling in the greenwood shade,
Some giant stole away his dame,
And seeking her we hither came.
But tell me who thou art, and why

With headless trunk that towered so high,
With flaming face beneath thy chest,
Thou liest crushed, in wild unrest.'

He heard the words that Lakshman spoke,
And memory in his breast awoke,
Recalling Indra's words to mind
He spoke in gentle tones and kind:
'O welcome, best of men, are ye
Whom, blest by fate, this day I see.
A blessing on each trenchant blade
That low on earth these arms has laid!
Thou, lord of men, incline thine ear
The story of my woe to hear,
While I the rebel pride declare
Which doomed me to the form I wear.'

CANTO LXXII.

KABANDHA'S TALE.

'Lord of the mighty arm, of yore
A shape transcending thought I wore,
And through the triple world's extent
My fame for might and valour went.
Scarce might the sun and moon on high,
Scarce Śakra, with my beauty vie.
Then for a time this form I took,
And the great world with trembling shook.
The saints in forest shades who dwelt
The terror of my presence felt.
But once I stirred to furious rage
Great Sthúlaśiras, glorious sage.
Culling in woods his hermit food
My hideous shape with fear he viewed.
Then forth his words of anger burst
That bade me live a thing accursed:
'Thou, whose delight is others' pain,
This grisly form shalt still retain.'
Then when I prayed him to relent
And fix some term of punishment,—
Prayed that the curse at length might cease,
He bade me thus expect release:
'Let Ráma cleave thine arms away
And on the pyre thy body lay,
And then shalt thou, set free from doom,
Thine own fair shape once more assume.'

O Lakshman, hear my words: in me
The world-illustrious Danu see.
By Indra's curse, subdued in fight,
I wear this form which scares the sight.
By sternest penance long maintained
The mighty Father's grace I gained.
When length of days the God bestowed,
With foolish pride my bosom glowed.
My life, of lengthened years assured,
I deemed from Śakra's might secured.
Led by my senseless pride astray
I challenged Indra to the fray.
A flaming bolt with many a knot
With his terrific arm he shot,
And straight my head and thighs compressed
Were buried in my bulky chest.
Deaf to each prayer and piteous call
He sent me not to Yama's hall.
'Thy prayers and cries,' he said, 'are vain;
The Father's word must true remain.'
'But how may lengthened life be spent
By one thy bolt has torn and rent?
How can I live,' I cried, 'unfed,
With shattered face and thighs and head?'
As thus I spoke his grace to crave,
Arms each a league in length he gave,
And opened in my chest beneath
This mouth supplied with fearful teeth.
So my huge arms I used to cast
Round woodland creatures as they passed,
And fed within the forest here
On lion, tiger, pard, and deer.
Then Indra spake to soothe my grief:
'When Ráma and his brother chief

From thy huge bulk those arms shall cleave,
Then shall the skies thy soul receive.'
Disguised in this terrific shape
I let no woodland thing escape,
And still my longing soul was pleased
Whene'er my arms a victim seized,
For in these arms I fondly thought
Would Ráma's self at last be caught.
Thus hoping, toiling many a day
I yearned to cast my life away,
And here, my lord, thou standest now:
Blessings be thine! for none but thou
Could cleave my arms with trenchant stroke:
True are the words the hermit spoke.
Now let me, best of warriors, lend
My counsel, and thy plans befriend,
And aid thee with advice in turn
If thou with fire my corse wilt burn.'
As thus the mighty Danu prayed
With offer of his friendly aid,
While Lakshmaṇ gazed with anxious eye,
The virtuous Ráma made reply:
'Lakshmaṇ and I through forest shade
From Janasthán a while had strayed.
When none was near her, Rávaṇ came
And bore away my glorious dame.
The giant's form and size unknown,
I learn as yet his name alone.
Not yet the power and might we know
Or dwelling of the monstrous foe.
With none our helpless feet to guide
We wander here by sorrow tried.
Let pity move thee to requite
Our service in the funeral rite.

Our hands shall bring the boughs that, dry
Where elephants have rent them, lie,
Then dig a pit, and light the fire
To burn thee as the laws require.
Do thou as meed of this declare
Who stole my spouse, his dwelling where.
O, if thou can, I pray thee say,
And let this grace our deeds repay.'
Danu had lent attentive ear
The words which Ráma spoke to hear,
And thus, a speaker skilled and tried,
To that great orator replied:
'No heavenly lore my soul endows,
Naught know I of thy Maithil spouse.
Yet will I, when my shape I wear,
Him who will tell thee all declare.
Then, Ráma, will my lips disclose
His name who well that giant knows.
But till the flames my corse devour
This hidden knowledge mocks my power.
For through that curse's withering taint
My knowledge now is small and faint.
Unknown the giant's very name
Who bore away the Maithil dame.
Cursed for my evil deeds I wore
A shape which all the worlds abhor.
Now ere with wearied steeds the sun
Through western skies his course have run,
Deep in a pit my body lay
And burn it in the wonted way.
When in the grave my corse is placed,
With fire and funeral honours graced,
Then I, great chief, his name will tell
Who knows the giant robber well.

With him, who guides his life aright,
In league of trusting love unite,
And he, O valiant prince, will be
A faithful friend and aid to thee.
For, Ráma, to his searching eyes
The triple world uncovered lies.
For some dark cause of old, I ween,
Through all the spheres his ways have been.'

CANTO LXXIII.

KABANDHA'S COUNSEL.

The monster ceased: the princely pair
Heard great Kabandha's eager prayer.
Within a mountain cave they sped,
Where kindled fire with care they fed.
Then Lakshmaṇ in his mighty hands
Brought ample store of lighted brands,
And to a pile of logs applied
The flame that ran from side to side.
The spreading glow with gentle force
Consumed Kabandha's mighty corse,
Till the unresting flames had drunk
The marrow of the monstrous trunk,
As balls of butter melt away
Amid the fires that o'er them play.
Then from the pyre, like flame that glows
Undimmed by cloudy smoke, he rose,
In garments pure of spot or speck,
A heavenly wreath about his neck.
Resplendent in his bright attire
He sprang exultant from the pyre,
While from neck, arm, and foot was sent
The flash of gold and ornament.
High on a chariot, bright of hue,
Which swans of fairest pinion drew,
He filled each region of the air
With splendid glow reflected there.
Then in the sky he stayed his car

And called to Ráma from afar:
'Hear, chieftain, while my lips explain
The means to win thy spouse again.
Six plans, O prince, the wise pursue
To reach the aims we hold in view.[1]
When evils ripening sorely press
They load the wretch with new distress.
So thou and Lakshmaṇ, tried by woe,
Have felt at last a fiercer blow,
And plunged in bitterest grief to-day
Lament thy consort torn away.[2]
There is no course but this: attend;
Make, best of friends, that chief thy friend.
Unless his prospering help thou gain
Thy plans and hopes must all be vain.
O Ráma, hear my words, and seek
Sugríva, for of him I speak.
His brother Báli, Indra's son,
Expelled him when the fight was won.
With four great chieftains, faithful still,
He dwells on Rishyamúka's hill,—
Fair mountain, lovely with the flow
Of Pampá's waves that glide below,—
Lord of the Vánars,[1] just and true,
Strong, very glorious, bright to view,
Unmatched in counsel, firm and meek,
Bound by each word his lips may speak,
Good, splendid, mighty, bold and brave,
Wise in each plan to guide and save.
His brother, fired by lust of sway,
Drove forth the prince in woods to stray.

[1] Peace, war, marching, halting, sowing dissensions, and seeking protection

[1] See Book I., Canto XVI.

In all thy search for Sítá he
Thy ready friend and help will be.
With him to aid thee in thy quest
Dismiss all sorrow from thy breast.
Time is a mighty power, and none
His fixed decree can change or shun.
So rich reward thy toil shall bless,
And naught can stay thy sure success.
Speed hence, O chief, without delay,
To strong Sugríva take thy way.
This hour thy footsteps onward bend,
And make that mighty prince thy friend.
With him before the attesting flame
In solemn truth alliance frame.
Nor wilt thou, if thy heart be wise,
Sugríva, Vánar king, despise.
Of boundless strength, all shapes he wears,
He hearkens to a suppliant's prayers,
And, grateful for each kindly deed,
Will help and save in hour of need.
And you, I ween, the power possess
To aid his hopes and give redress.
He, let his cause succeed or fail,
Will help you, and you must prevail.
A banished prince, in fear and woe
He roams where Pampá's waters flow,
True offspring of the Lord of Light
Expelled by Báli's conquering might.
Go, Raghu's son, that chieftain seek
Who dwells on Rishyamúka's peak.
Before the flame thy weapons cast
And bind the bonds of friendship fast.
For, prince of all the Vánar race,
He in his wisdom knows each place

Where dwell the fierce gigantic brood
Who make the flesh of man their food.
To him, O Raghu's son, to him
Naught in the world is dark or dim,
Where'er the mighty Day-God gleams
Resplendent with a thousand beams.
He over rocky height and hill,
Through gloomy cave, by lake and rill,
Will with his Vánars seek the prize,
And tell thee where thy lady lies.
And he will send great chieftains forth
To east and west and south and north,
To seek the distant spot where she
All desolate laments for thee.
He e'en in Rávaṇ's halls would find
Thy Sítá, gem of womankind.
Yea, if the blameless lady lay
On Meru's loftiest steep,
Or, far removed from light of day,
Where hell is dark and deep,
That chief of all the Vánar race
His way would still explore,
Meet the cowed giants face to face
And thy dear spouse restore.'

CANTO LXXIV.

KABANDHA'S DEATH.

When wise Kabhandha thus had taught
The means to find the dame they sought,
And urged them onward in the quest,
He thus again the prince addressed:
'This path, O Raghu's son, pursue
Where those fair trees which charm the view,
Extending westward far away,
The glory of their bloom display,
Where their bright leaves Rose-apples show,
And the tall Jak and Mango grow.
Whene'er you will, those trees ascend,
Or the long branches shake and bend.
Their savoury fruit like Amrit eat,
Then onward speed with willing feet.
Beyond this shady forest, decked
With flowering trees, your course direct.
Another grove you then will find
With every joy to take the mind,
Like Nandan with its charms displayed,
Or Northern Kuru's blissful shade;
Where trees distil their balmy juice,
And fruit through all the year produce;
Whose shades with seasons ever fair
With Chaitraratha may compare;
Where trees whose sprays with fruit are bowed
Rise like a mountain or a cloud.
There, when you list, from time to time,

The loaded trees may Lakshmaṇ climb,
Or from the shaken boughs supply
Sweet fruit that may with Amrit vie.
The onward path pursuing still
From wood to wood, from hill to hill,
Your happy eyes at length will rest
On Pampá's lotus-covered breast.
Her banks with gentle slope descend,
Nor stones nor weed the eyes offend,
And o'er smooth beds of silver sand
Lotus and lily blooms expand.
There swans and ducks and curlews play,
And keen-eyed ospreys watch their prey,
And from the limpid waves are heard
Glad notes of many a water-bird.
Untaught a deadly foe to fear
They fly not when a man is near,
And fat as balls of butter they
Will, when you list, your hunger stay.
Then Lakshmaṇ with his shafts will take
The fish that swim the brook and lake,
Remove each bone and scale and fin,
Or strip away the speckled skin,
And then on iron skewers broil
For thy repast the savoury spoil.
Thou on a heap of flowers shalt rest
And eat the meal his hands have dressed.
There shalt thou lie on Pampá's brink,
And Lakshmaṇ's hand shall give thee drink,
Filling a lotus leaf with cool
Pure water from the crystal pool,
To which the opening blooms have lent
The riches of divinest scent.
Beside thee at the close of day

Will Lakshman through the woodland stray,
And show thee where the monkeys sleep
In caves beneath the mountain steep.
Loud-voiced as bulls they forth will burst
And seek the flood, oppressed by thirst;
Then rest a while, their wants supplied,
Their well-fed bands on Pampá's side.
Thou roving there at eve shalt see
Rich clusters hang on shrub and tree,
And Pampá flushed with roseate glow,
And at the view forget thy woe.
There shalt thou mark with strange delight
Each loveliest flower that blooms by night,
While lily buds that shrink from day
Their tender loveliness display.
In that far wild no hand but thine
Those peerless flowers in wreaths shall twine:
Immortal in their changeless pride,
Ne'er fade those blooms and ne'er are dried.
There erst on holy thoughts intent
Their days Matanga's pupils spent.
Once for their master food they sought,
And store of fruit and berries brought.
Then as they laboured through the dell
From limb and brow the heat-drops fell:
Thence sprang and bloomed those wondrous trees;
Such holy power have devotees.
Thus, from the hermits' heat-drops sprung,
Their growth is ever fresh and young.
There Śavarí is dwelling yet,
Who served each vanished anchoret.
Beneath the shade of holy boughs
That ancient votaress keeps her vows.
Her happy eyes on thee will fall,

O godlike prince, adored by all,
And she, whose life is pure from sin,
A blissful seat in heaven will win.
But cross, O son of Raghu, o'er,
And stand on Pampá's western shore.
A tranquil hermitage that lies
Deep in the woods will meet thine eyes.
No wandering elephants invade
The stillness of that holy shade,
But checked by Saint Matanga's power
They spare each consecrated bower.
Through many an age those trees have stood
World-famous as Matanga's wood.
Still, Raghu's son, pursue thy way:
Through shades where birds are vocal stray,
Fair as the blessed wood where rove
Immortal Gods, or Nandan's grove.
Near Pampá eastward, full in sight,
Stands Rishyamúka's wood-crowned height.
'Tis hard to climb that towering steep
Where serpents unmolested sleep.
The free and bounteous, formed of old
By Brahmá of superior mould,
Who sink when day is done to rest
Reclining on that mountain crest—,
What wealth or joy in dreams they view,
Awaking find the vision true.
But if a villain stained with crime
That holy hill presume to climb,
The giants in their fury sweep
From the hill top the wretch asleep.
There loud and long is heard the roar
Of elephants on Pampá's shore,
Who near Matanga's dwelling stray

And in those waters bathe and play.
A while they revel by the flood,
Their temples stained with streams like blood,
Then wander far away dispersed,
Dark as huge clouds before they burst.
But ere they part they drink their fill
Of bright pure water from the rill,
Delightful to the touch, where meet
Scents of all flowers divinely sweet,
Then speeding from the river side
Deep in the sheltering thicket hide.
Then bears and tigers shalt thou view
Whose soft skins show the sapphire's hue,
And silvan deer that wander nigh
Shall harmless from thy presence fly.
High in that mountain's wooded side
Is a fair cavern deep and wide,
Yet hard to enter: piles of rock
The portals of the cavern block.[1]
Fast by the eastern door a pool
Gleams with broad waters fresh and cool,
Where stores of roots and fruit abound,
And thick tress shade the grassy ground.
This mountain cave the virtuous-souled
Sugríva and his Vánars hold,
And oft the mighty chieftain seeks
The summits of those towering peaks.'
Thus spake Kabandha high in air
His counsel to the royal pair.
Still on his neck that wreath he bore,
And radiance like the sun's he wore.
Their eyes the princely brothers raised

[1] Or as the commentator Tírtha says, Śilápidhánú, rock-covered, may be the name of the cavern.

And on that blissful being gazed :
'Behold, we go : no more delay ;
Begin,' they cried, 'thy heavenward way.'
'Depart,' Kabandha's voice replied,
'Pursue your search, and bliss betide'.
Thus to the happy chiefs he said,
Then on his heavenward journey sped.
Thus once again Kabandha won
A shape that glittered like the sun
Without a spot or stain.
Thus bade he Ráma from the air
To great Sugríva's side repair
His friendly love to gain.

CANTO LXXV.

ŚAVARÍ.

Thus counselled by their friendly guide
On through the wood the princes hied,
Pursuing still the eastern road
To Pampá which Kabandha showed,
Where trees that on the mountains grew
With fruit like honey charmed the view.
They rested weary for the night
Upon a mountain's wooded height,
Then onward with the dawn they hied
And stood on Pampá's western side,
Where Śavarí's fair home they viewed
Deep in that shady solitude.
The princes reached the holy ground
Where noble trees stood thick around,
And joying in the lovely view
Near to the aged votaress drew.
To meet the sons of Raghu came,
With hands upraised, the pious dame,
And bending low with reverence meet
Welcomed them both and pressed their feet.
Then water, as beseems, she gave,
Their lips to cool, their feet to lave.
To that pure saint who never broke
One law of duty Ráma spoke:
'I trust no cares invade thy peace,
While holy works and zeal increase;
That thou content with scanty food

All touch of ire hast long subdued ;
That all thy vows are well maintained
While peace of mind is surely gained ;
That reverence of the saints who taught
Thy faithful heart due fruit has brought.'
The aged votaress pure of taint,
Revered by every perfect saint,
Rose to her feet by Ráma's side
And thus in gentle tones replied :
'My penance' meed this day I see
Complete, my lord, in meeting thee.
This day the fruit of birth I gain,
Nor have I served the saints in vain.
I reap rich fruits of toil and vow,
And heaven itself awaits me now,
When I, O chief of men, have done
Honour to thee the godlike one.
I feel, great lord, thy gentle eye
My earthly spirit purify,
And I, brave tamer of thy foes,
Shall through thy grace in bliss repose.
Thy feet by Chitrakúṭa strayed
When those great saints whom I obeyed,
In dazzling chariots bright of hue,
Hence to their heavenly mansions flew.
As the high saints were borne away
I heard their holy voices say :
'In this pure grove, O devotee,
Prince Ráma soon will visit thee.
When he and Lakshmaṇ seek this shade,
Be to thy guests all honour paid.
Him shalt thou see, and pass away
To those blest worlds which ne'er decay.'
To me, O mighty chief, the best

Of lofty saints these words addressed.
Laid up within my dwelling lie
Fruits of each sort which woods supply,—
Food culled for thee in endless store
From every tree on Pampá's shore.'

Thus to her virtuous guest she sued,
And he, with heavenly lore endued,
Words such as these in turn addressed
To her with equal knowledge blest:
'Danu himself the power has told
Of thy great masters lofty-souled.
Now, if thou will, mine eyes would fain
Assurance of their glories gain.'

She heard the prince his wish declare:
Then rose she, and the royal pair
Of brothers through the wood she led
That round her holy dwelling spread.
'Behold Matanga's wood,' she cried,
'A grove made famous far and wide,
Dark as thick clouds and filled with herds
Of wandering deer, and joyous birds.
In this pure spot each reverend sire
With offerings fed the holy fire.
See, here the western altar stands
Where daily with their trembling hands
The aged saints, so long obeyed
By me, their gifts of blossoms laid.
The holy power, O Raghu's son,
By their ascetic virtue won,
Still keeps their well-loved altar bright,
Filling the air with beams of light.
And those seven neighbouring lakes behold
Which, when the saints infirm and old,
Worn out by fasts, no longer sought,

Moved hither drawn by power of thought.
Look, Ráma, where the devotees
Hung their bark mantles on the trees,
Fresh from the bath: those garments wet
Through many a day are dripping yet.
See, through those aged hermits' power
The tender spray, the bright-hued flower
With which the saints their worship paid,
Fresh to this hour nor change nor fade.
Here thou hast seen each lawn and dell,
And heard the tale I had to tell:
Permit thy servant, lord, I pray,
To cast this mortal shell away,
For I would dwell, this life resigned,
With those great saints of lofty mind,
Whom I within this holy shade
With reverential care obeyed.'

When Ráma and his brother heard
The pious prayer the dame preferred,
Filled full of transport and amazed
They marvelled as her words they praised.
Then Ráma to the votaress said
Whose holy vows were perfected:
'Go, lady, where thou fain wouldst be,
O thou who well hast honoured me.'

Her locks in hermit fashion tied,
Clad in bark coat and black deer's hide,
When Ráma gave consent, the dame
Resigned her body to the flame.
Then, like the fire that burns and glows,
To heaven the sainted lady rose,
In all her heavenly garments dressed,
Immortal wreaths on neck and breast,
Bright with celestial gems she shone

Most beautiful to look upon,
And like the flame of lightning sent
A glory through the firmament.
That holy sphere the dame attained,
By depth of contemplation gained,
Where roam high saints with spirits pure
In bliss that shall for aye endure.

CANTO LXXVI.

PAMPÁ.

When Śavarí had sought the skies
And gained her splendid virtue's prize,
Ráma with Lakshmaṇ stayed to brood
O'er the strange scenes their eyes had viewed.
His mind upon those saints was bent,
For power and might preëminent,
And he to musing Lakshmaṇ spoke
The thoughts that in his bosom woke:
'Mine eyes this wondrous home have viewed
Of those great saints with souls subdued,
Where peaceful tigers dwell and birds,
And deer abound in heedless herds.
Our feet upon the banks have stood
Of those seven lakes within the wood,
Where we have duly dipped, and paid
Libations to each royal shade.
Forgotten now are thoughts of ill
And joyful hopes my bosom fill.
Again my heart is light and gay
And grief and care have passed away.
Come, brother, let us hasten where
Bright Pampá's flood is fresh and fair,
And towering in their beauty near
Mount Rishyamúka's heights appear,
Which, offspring of the Lord of Light,
Still fearing Báli's conquering might,
With four brave chiefs of Vánar race
Sugríva makes his dwelling-place.
I long with eager heart to find

That leader of the Vánar kind,
For on that chief my hopes depend
That this our quest have prosperous end.'
Thus Ráma spoke, in battle tried,
And thus Sumitrá's son replied:
'Come, brother, come, and speed away:
My spirit brooks no more delay.'
Thus spake Sumitrá's son, and then
Forth from the grove the king of men
With his dear brother by his side
To Pampá's lucid waters hied.
He gazed upon the woods where grew
Trees rich in flowers of every hue.
From brake and dell on every side
The curlew and the peacock cried,
And flocks of screaming parrots made
Shrill music in the bloomy shade.
His eager eyes, as on he went,
On many a pool and tree were bent.
Inflamed with love he journeyed on
Till a fair flood before him shone.
He stood upon the water's side
Which streams from distant hills supplied:
Matanga's name that water bore:
There bathed he from the shelving shore.
Then, each on earnest thoughts intent,
Still farther on their way they went.
But Ráma's heart once more gave way
Beneath his grief and wild dismay.
Before him lay the noble flood
Adorned with many a lotus bud.
On its fair banks Aśokas glowed,
And all bright trees their blossoms showed.
Green banks that silver waves confined

With lovely groves were fringed and lined.
The crystal waters in their flow
Showed level sands that gleamed below.
There glittering fish and tortoise played,
And bending trees gave pleasant shade.
There creepers on the branches hung
With lover-like embraces clung.
There gay Gandharvas loved to meet,
And Kinnars sought the calm retreat.
There wandering Yakshas found delight,
Snake-gods and lovers of the night.
Cool were the pleasant waters, gay
Each tree with creeper, flower, and spray.
There flushed the lotus darkly red,
Here their white glory lilies spread,
Here sweet buds showed their tints of blue:
So carpets gleam with many a hue.
A grove of Mangoes blossomed nigh,
Echoing with the peacock's cry.
When Ráma by his brother's side
The lovely flood of Pampá eyed,
Decked like a beauty, fair to see
With every charm of flower and tree,
His mighty heart with woe was rent
And thus he spoke in wild lament:

'Here, Lakshman, on this beauteous shore,
Stands, dyed with tints of many an ore,
The mountain Rishyamúka bright
With flowery trees that crown each height.
Sprung from the chief who, famed of yore,
The name of Riksharajas bore,
Sugríva, chieftain strong and dread,
Dwells on that mountain's towering head.
Go to him, best of men, and seek

That prince of Vánars on the peak.
I cannot longer brook my pain,
Or, Sítá lost, my life retain.'
Thus by the pangs of love distressed,
His thoughts on Sítá bent,
His faithful brother he addressed,
And cried in wild lament.
He reached the lovely ground that lay
On Pampá's wooded side,
And told in anguish and dismay,
The grief he could not hide.
With listless footsteps faint and slow
His way the chief pursued,
Till Pampá with her glorious show
Of flowering woods he viewed.
Through shades where every bird was found
The prince with Lakshman passed,
And Pampá with her groves around
Burst on his eyes at last.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

BOOK III.

"The narrative of Ráma's exile in the jungle is one of the most obscure portions of the Rámáyana, inasmuch as it is difficult to discover any trace of the original tradition, or any illustration of actual life and manners, beyond the artificial life of self-mortification and self-denial said to have been led by the Brahman sages of olden time. At the same time, however, the story throws some light upon the significance of the poem, and upon the character in which the Brahmanical author desired to represent Ráma; and consequently it deserves more serious consideration than the nature of the subject-matter would otherwise seem to imply.

According to the Rámáyana, the hero Ráma spent more than thirteen years of his exile in wandering amongst the different Brahmanical settlements, which appear to have been scattered over the country between the Ganges and the Godáveri; his wanderings extending from the hill of Chitra-kúṭa in Bundelkund, to the modern town of Nasik on the western side of India, near the sources of the Godáveri river, and about seventy-five miles to the north-west of Bombay. The appearance of these Brahmanical hermitages in the country far away to the south of the Raj of Kosala, seems to call for critical inquiry. Each hermitage is said to have belonged to some particular sage, who is famous in Brahmanical tradition. But whether the sages named were really contemporaries of Ráma, or whether they could possibly have flourished at one and the same period, is

open to serious question. It is of course impossible to fix with any degree of certainty the relative chronology of the several sages, who are said to have been visited by Ráma; but still it seems tolerably clear that some belonged to an age far anterior to that in which the Rámáyana was composed, and probably to an age anterior to that in which Ráma existed as a real and living personage; whilst, at least, one sage is to be found who could only have existed in the age during which the Rámáyana was produced in its present form. The main proofs of these inferences are as follows. An interval of many centuries seems to have elapsed between the composition of the Rig-Veda and that of the Rámáyana; a conclusion which has long been proved by the evidence of language, and is generally accepted by Sanskrit scholars. But three of the sages, said to have been contemporary with Ráma, namely, Viśvámitra, Atri and Agastya, are frequently mentioned in the hymns of the Rig-Veda; whilst Válmíki, the sage dwelling at Chitra-kúṭa, is said to have been himself the composer of the Rámáyana. Again, the sage Atri, whom Ráma visited immediately after his departure from Chitra-kúṭa, appears in the genealogical list preserved in the Mahá Bhárata, as the progenitor of the Moon, and consequently as the first ancestor of the Lunar race: whilst his grandson Buddha [Budha] is said to have married Iláa, the daughter of Ikhsváku who was himself the remote ancestor of the Solar race of Ayodhyá, from whom Ráma was removed by many generations. These conclusions are not perhaps based upon absolute proof, because they are drawn from untrustworthy authorities; but still the chronological difficulties have been fully apprehended by the Pundits, and an attempt has been made to reconcile all contradictions by represent-

ing the sages to have lived thousands of years, and to have often re-appeared upon earth in different ages widely removed from each other. Modern science refuses to accept such explanations; and consequently it is impossible to escape the conclusion that if Válmíki composed the Rámáyana in the form of Sanskrit in which it has been preserved, he could not have flourished in the same age as the sages who are named in the Rig-Veda". Wheeler's *History of India, Vol.* II., 229.

PAGE 78.

And King Himálaya's Child.

Umá or Párvatí, was the daughter of Himálaya and Menâ. She is the heroine of Kálidása's *Kumára-Sambhava* or *Birth of the War-God.*

PAGE 81.

Strong Kumbhakarṇa slumbering deep
In chains of never-ending sleep.

"Kumbhakarṇa, the gigantic brother of the titanic Rávaṇ,—named from the size of his ears which could contain a *Kumbha* or large water-jar—had such an appetite that he used to consume six months' provisions in a single day. Brahmá, to relieve the alarm of the world, which had begun to entertain serious apprehensions of being eaten up, decreed that the giant should sleep six months at a time and wake for only one day during which he might consume his six months' allowance without trespassing unduly on the reproductive capabilities of the earth." *Scenes from the Rámáyan*, p. 153, 2nd edit.

PAGE 110.

Like Śiva when his angry might
Stayed Daksha's sacrificial rite.

The following spirited version of this old story is from the pen of Mr. W. Waterfield :

"[This is a favourite subject of Hindú sculpture, especially on the temples of Shiva, such as the caves of Elephanta and Ellora. It, no doubt, is an allegory of the contest between the followers of Shiva and the worshippers of the Elements, who observed the old ritual of the Vedas ; in which the name of Shiva is never mentioned.]

Dakshá for devotion
Made a mighty feast ;
Milk and curds and butter,
Flesh of bird and beast,

Rice and spice and honey,
Sweetmeats ghí and gur,[1]
Gifts for all the Bráhmans,
Food for all the poor.

At the gates of Gangá [2]
Daksha held his feast ;
Called the gods unto it,
Greatest as the least.

All the gods were gathered
Round with one accord ;
All the gods but Umá,
All but Umá's lord,

[1] Ghí : clarified butter. Gur : molasses.

[2] Haridwar (Anglicè Hurdwar) where the Ganges enters the plain country.

Umá sat with Shiva
On Kailása hill;
Round them stood the Rudras
Watching for their will.

Who is this that cometh
Lilting to his lute?
All the birds of heaven
Heard his music, mute.

Round his head a garland
Rich of hue was wreathed;
Every sweetest odour
From its blossoms breathed.

'Tis the Muni Nárad;
'Mong the gods he fares,
Ever making mischief
By the tales he bears.

"Hail to lovely Umá!
Hail to Umá's lord!
Wherefore are they absent
From her father's board?

Multiplied his merits
Would be truly thrice,
Could he gain your favour
For his sacrifice."

Wroth of heart was Umá:
To her lord she spake:—
"Why dost thou, the mighty,
Of no rite partake?

"Straight I speed to Daksha
Such a sight to see:
If he be my father,
He must welcome thee."

Wondrous was in glory
Daksha's holy rite;
Never had creation
Viewed so brave a sight.

Gods, and nymphs, and fathers,
Sages, Brâhmans, sprites,—
Every diverse creature
Wrought that rite of rites.

Quickly then a quaking
Fell on all from far;
Umá stood among them
On her lion car.

"Greeting, gods and sages,
Greeting, father mine!
Work hath wondrous virtue,
Where such aids combine.

"Guest-hall never gathered
Goodlier company:
Seemeth all are welcome,—
All the gods but me."

Spake the Muni Daksha,
Stern and cold his tone;—
"Welcome thou, too, daughter,
Since thou com'st alone.

"But thy frenzied husband
Suits another shrine;
He is no partaker
Of this feast of mine.

"He who walks in darkness
Loves no deeds of light;

He who herds with demons
Shuns each kindly sprite.

"Let him wander naked,—
Wizard weapons wield,—
Dance his frantic measure
Round the funeral field.

"Art thou yet delighted
With the reeking hide,
Body smeared with ashes,
Skulls in necklace tied?

"Thou to love this monster!
Thou to plead his part!
Know the moon and Gangá
Share that faithless heart.

"Vainly art thou vying
With thy rivals' charms:
Are not coils of serpents
Softer than thine arms?"

Words like these from Daksha
Daksha's daughter heard:
Then a sudden passion
All her bosom stirred.

Eyes with fury flashing,
Speechless in her ire,
Headlong did she hurl her
'Mid the holy fire.

Then a trembling terror
Overcame each one,
And their minds were troubled
Like a darkened sun;

And a cruel Vision,
Face of lurid flame,
Umá's Wrath Incarnate,
From the altar came.

Fiendlike forms by thousands
Started from his side,
'Gainst the sacrificers
All their might they plied:

Till the saints availed not
Strength like theirs to stay,
And the gods distracted
Turned and fled away.

Hushed were hymns and chanting,
Priests were mocked and spurned;
Food defiled and scattered;
Altars overturned.—

Then, to save the object
Sought at such a price,
Like a deer in semblance
Sped the sacrifice.

Soaring toward the heavens,
Through the sky it fled;
But the Rudras chasing
Smote away its head.

Prostrate on the pavement
Daksha fell dismayed:—
"Mightiest, thou hast conquered;
Thee we ask for aid.

"Let not our oblations
All be rendered vain;

Let our toilsome labour
Full fruition gain."

Bright the broken altars
Shone with Shiva's form ;
"Be it so ! " His blessing
Soothed that frantic storm.

Soon his anger ceases,
Though it soon arise ;—
But the Deer's Head ever
Blazes in the skies."

Indian Ballads and other Poems.

PAGE 225.

URVAŚÎ.

"The personification of Urvasî herself is as thin as that of Eôs or Selênê. Her name is often found in the Veda as a mere name for the morning, and in the plural number it is used to denote the dawns which passing over men bring them to old age and death. Urvasî is the bright flush of light overspreading the heaven before the sun rises, and is but another form of the many mythical beings of Greek mythology whose names take us back to the same idea or the same root. As the dawn in the Vedic hymns is called Urûkî, the far-going (Têlephassa, Têlephos), so is she also Uruasî, the wide-existing or wide-spreading ; as are Eurôpê, Euryanassa, Euryphassa, and many more of the sisters of Athênê and Aphroditê. As such she is the mother of Vasishtha, the bright being, as Oidipous is the son of Iokastê ; and although Vasishtha, like Oidipous, has become a mortal bard or sage, he is still the son of Mitra and Varuṇa, of night and day. Her lover Purûravas is the counterpart of the Hellenic Polydeukês,

but the continuance of her union with him depends on the condition that she never sees him unclothed. But the Gandharvas, impatient of her long sojourn among mortal men resolved to bring her back to their bright home; and Purûravas is thus led unwitingly to disregard her warning. A ewe with two lambs was tied to her couch, and the Gandharvas stole one of them; Urvasî said, "They take away my darling, as if I lived in a land where there is no hero and no man." They stole the second, and she upbraided her husband again. Then Purûravas looked and said, "How can that be a land without heroes or men where I am?" And naked he sprang up; he thought it was too long to put on his dress. Then the Gandharvas sent a flash of lightning, and Urvasî saw her husband naked as by daylight. Then she vanished. "I come back," she said, and went. 'Then he bewailed his vanished love in bitter grief.' Her promise to return was fulfilled, but for a moment only, at the Lotos-lake, and Purûravas in vain beseeches her to tarry longer. 'What shall I do with thy speech?' is the answer of Urvasî. 'I am gone like the first of the dawns. Purûravas, go home again. I am hard to be caught like the winds.' Her lover is in utter despair; but when he lies down to die, the heart of Urvasî was melted, and she bids him come to her on the last night of the year. On that night only he might be with her; but a son should be born to him. On that day he went up to the golden seats, and there Urvasî told him that the Gandharvas would grant him one wish, and that he must make his choice. 'Choose thou for me,' he said; and she answered, 'Say to them, Let me be one of you.'

Cox's *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*. Vol. I. p. 397.

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36	28	whe	who.
64	22	Adite	Aditi.
66	20	Matangí	Mátangí.
85	20	Moustrous	Monstrous.
120	9	Syenagámi	Śyenagámí.
121	12	Skillful	Skilful.
134	25	Ruddy	Rudely.
199	16	my,	my.
213	21	Ghandharva	Gandharva.
249	12	Ravaṇ	Rávaṇ.
250	14	Vaitaraṇi	Vaitaraṇí.

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